The Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectibles

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

VIRGIL FINLAY
Mister Fantastic
HIS LIFE AND WORKS

CLASSIC CREATORS
Wonder Woman's Father

UNSEEN GOLD
The Forsaken Flash

10 More Timely Treasures
(Collect 'em all!)

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Apparent Grade?!

Recently a number of collectors have written to ask about the term "apparent grade" and its ever increasing use in auction catalogs and dealer lists. A few were even interested in the development of the concept. To understand the need for "Apparent Grade" one must look back to the way the original "anti" restoration faction of the hobby felt about the description process. They wanted (demanded) that books be described with their graded condition BEFORE they were restored. (If a book was originally VG and was restored until it looked FN, it must still be described as a VG book.)

For many of us, this can be an extremely difficult task, because it requires of the grader to "divine the past", so to speak, and literally reconstruct the restoration history of the book in question. In many cases this is easy to figure out. In just as many cases the restoration has been so extensive and complicated that it would literally take a doctoral dissertation to accurately and thoroughly review. Besides, I think the vast majority of today's collectors really don't want to be saddled with the "burden" of attempting to describe restored comics by their original condition.

There's an easier more efficient method called "apparent" grade. With the use of the term "apparent" both buyer and seller are informed and yet the seller is not required to make technical judgements.

As an example, consider an originally GD copy of *Batman* #20. During the professional restoration process, tears were sealed, new staples added, color added, pages cleaned, and numerous other, less identifiable, repairs made that the average collector may never even see… yet all of these processes were used to increase the attractiveness of the book until it "looks" like a VF copy.

But most can at least, confirm that some work was done, and so after restoration has been detected, the seller simply describes the book as an "Apparent Very Fine" ("App VF" for short). When a potential buyer sees the "App" before the abbreviated nomenclature grade they know that it isn't really VF… it just "looks" VF and that it has been restored.

By using the term "apparent", the seller has now fulfilled his obligation to disclose known restoration, has not sacrificed and undue amount of precious advertising space, and has not been required to reconstruct the past or completely understand every complex restoration process.

When the buyer sees the term "apparent" as part of the description of condition, they are instantly alerted that the book in question has been restored, know approximately what the book "looks" like, and can always seek additional descriptive information from the seller or other experts.

I'd like to hear what you think about the use of apparent grades. Send a postcard or letter with your views and they might just see print in a future installment of CBM's Grading Forum. Your opinion counts… let it be heard!

Gary

Gary M. Carter

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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Help Rather Than Hype

Matt Schiffman's Marketplace report in #22 was very enlightening (as were the dealer reports) and I hope to see more market info in CBM like that. I also would like to see more surveys like the Top Timelys. I discovered that I don't know nearly as much about the early Marvel incarnations as I thought I did. Bravo to CBM for educating us rather than hyping us! Keep up the good work and I hope you make it past 21 issues this time! I'll keep my fingers crossed…

–Jeff Marcos, Washington

Although it's impossible to predict the future Jeff, I feel pretty confident the new CBM will be around quite awhile. As for surveys, we've got a number them planned for future issues. Have you seen our top five cover survey yet? I hope every CBM reader will participate. We've already received quite a few and they are really good. I can't wait to put them all together in a feature. Thanks for writing.

Welcome Back Carter

It is great to see Comic Book Marketplace back on the newsstands after a two year hiatus. This appealing periodical is unwavering in its focus on the Golden and Silver Ages of comics. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that CBM is now a Gemstone publication. I am a devotee of the Russ Cochran EC series published by Gemstone. They provide a delightful, economical way to read and collect the EC classics.

I much prefer the original, and now resurrected, Comic Book Marketplace over the Overstreet's CBM produced in the interim. I love reading the Overstreet Annual Price Guide; it is a staple of the industry and has become a collectible in itself (witness CBM #16). However, I have little interest in frequent price updates. I am not a retailer and find monthly price fluctuations to be ephemeral and irrelevant. A once a year price guide will suffice for me.

The articles in CBM #22 were excellent, including the Henry Mietkiewicz piece on Joe Shuster and Pat S. Calhoun's column on ACG horror. I am really looking forward to the Spider-Man special issue.

Welcome back, Gary M. Carter and company. (Welcome back Carter… sounds like an old TV show). I hope you hang around for more than 21 issues this time.

–Timothy M. Walters, Oklahoma

I also thought the articles you mention were particularly interesting. As much as has been written on Shuster, Henry's piece really rejuvenated my interest in pre-hero DC Siegel and Shuster material. And I think that ACG is still one of the most under-rated, interesting, and generally unexplored companies around. On another note… I'm starting to get a little sensitive about the number 21! The old CBM stopped with issue #21… then the Overstreet Monthly ceased publication with #21… Whew! On the positive side, Maybe the new CBM will keep going until the year 2021! Here's hopin'…

A Whopping 12¢

Can't put into words how delighted I was to see issue #22 of your magazine on a snowy Saturday morning this month and realize that you were back in business and all was right with the world. I was able to take my mind off of the weather and get lost in those engrossing articles you guys have never failed to deliver.

As if things couldn't get any better, I noticed that you are going to devote a special issue to the comic superhero that has dominated my life, "Spider-Man". I have carefully preserved every issue of the ASM title and can travel back to any time in my youth simply by scanning a particular issue. The books are priceless and so was the Silver Age of comics for me. Each superhero had their own separate publication and you could easily follow their exploits from month to month, all for a whopping 12¢. With all due respect to the Overstreet Publication, they may have the pulse of today's "Generation X" collectors, but you have the soul of us Golden and Silver Age collectors, craving to reminisce about our youthful days gone bye.

–William H. Georger, New Jersey

Your kind words have made my day! The upcoming Spidey issue is really looking great. Oh, and imagine how we felt in the 50s from month to month when each issue was a whopping 10¢!!! DC, ACG, Atlas and rest… had my soul! Thanks for your nice letter, William.

More Oddballs Please

Loved Scott Shaw!'s Oddball Comics feature in Comic Book Marketplace #22. I use to think Konas were just dumb, now I know they were dumb but in a cool way. (I've even started collecting them for their really quite-good covers). It's nice to know there is at least one magazine that would have even printed an article on Kona. More! from! Scott! Shaw! please! And Congratulations on the revival of Comic Book Marketplace.

–Bill Sandusky, Maine

Scott! Shaw!'s articles! are! always! great! His! piece! on! Oddball Archie! in! this! issue! is! outstanding!

Dear Old Friend!

I've just completed a very entertaining reunion with a dear old friend! Now that

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the CBM is back in its original, monthly form, I feel as if the missing piece of the comics collecting hobby has been restored to its proper place. Welcome back CBM!

You picked up right where you left off. I enjoyed each of issue 22's articles, and especially the Timely report. Surveys like this one are fascinating, fun, and very important for collectors seeking scarce old comics. It was eye-opening to see such a variety of responses from such a knowledgeable group of dealers; the fact that the "scoring" was so close, and the categories all had many different books with similar scores, indicates that there is still quite a bit of "mystery" shrouding surviving Golden Age supplies. I'd like to see more surveys like this one.

I feel compelled to say a word or two about Henry Mietkiewicz's Joe Shuster article. Apart from being simply an excellent piece of writing, I was struck by the obvious love of the writer for the important man's work, and for the man himself. Coupled with its compelling historical information (which the collector in me can't get enough of,) and the simply beautiful art examples, this article left a real impression on me; finally, I realized that Henry had wonderfully captured the feelings of wonder, joy, and fascination that make up my own love for Golden Age comics. Thanks, Henry.

It was also nice to see Pat Calhoun's column again; although my own collecting interests differ a bit from Pat's, his columns always demonstrate the affection (and expertise) he feels for his collection. His columns in the old CBM truly captured the essence and value of the magazine as a whole, from the standpoint of this reader.

As usual, I'll make a pitch for a few articles I'd like to see in future issues (now that the "buttering up" session is completed!) I would love to see a comprehensive article on Jack Cole's early work, even if it covers just those wonderful Silver Streak Daredevil-Claw battles. Also, a review of the first ten or so issues of Jumbo would be nice. Last, how about "forcing" the venerable Jon Berk to write at least one of his very informative articles on early Golden Age every month? (Thanks for the info on the Target #6, Jon.) For those who don't know it already, Mr. Berk's collection is truly awesome... I credit my own viewing of it a few years ago at a Connecticut convention for inspiring my own Golden Age obsession!!

That's all for now from the smallest (it feels today like the coldest) state in the union. Time to get to work, Gary!! Each issue must top the last!!

–Jon Signorelli, Rhode Island

Thanks for not adding any extra pressure or anything Jon! Sheesh! I like the the very interesting tale that the Timely surveys scores told. And your right... the sheer number of different responses was very informative, as well as the the way their scores were so lopsided for some books (Cap #1 for example) and so evenly distributed in other lists. Thanks for your excellent Jon. I look forward to more!

Unseen Gold

When the old CBM "went away" we both thought we'd never see another magazine that we really related to ever again. For the last two years we've searched but alas in vain. Then CBM comes back and we are saved from page after page of new comic hype and gibberish. Bottom line, boy are we glad CBM is back!

Although we liked the entire "come-back" issue (#22), we both agree that Matt Nelson's "Unseen Gold" column was our favorite... great concept! I can't tell you how many times we thumb through the Gerber books and get frustrated at those blank white boxes! Now we can start filling them in!

–Vicki and Brian Edwards, Canada

Matt tells me he's got a lot more undiscovered beauties to tell us about and I'm looking forward to them too! Nice to have you both on board. When couples write I'm always reminded of Carter's third law of Panepictagraphy... "The couple that collects together stays together."

Yippee, Hooray, Cool

Yippee, Hooray, Cool, etc. CBM has returned, (the "original" so to speak). Since my copies of 1-21 are getting worn out... Hallelujah!

And the article about or concerning Joe Shuster by Henry Mietkiewicz was great. As I read the article concerning Mr. Shuster I again realized why so much GA material, in my view, is so NEAT. The art has a simplicity, an element of wackiness and just plain fun that many comics of today and other eras lack. Great stuff!

Mr. Kent Martin's article, "Shaping Our Lives With Comics" definitely hit the mark. As a youngster I can well remember trying to emulate comic book heroes. One of my favorites used to be the Lone Ranger. Ride into an area, settle a dispute and they'd ride out without trying to be a publicity hog or trying in some way for personal gain. "Just do'in my job" Hi-Yo Silver, away!

Anyway, welcome back and I'll be looking somewhere and some distance down the way for articles on the greatest, neatest, wackiest, best hearted super hero ever... Captain Marvel (the real one, not that goofy Marvel Comics guy). PS. I'm right down the road from Diamond Galleries. Man... I'd love to just visit that place and "soak up" some of their GA material.

–William Falk, Maryland

We're back (Yippee), Kent Martin will be back next issue with a great second installment of his column(Hooray), and we've an extensive Captain Marvel article the works right now (Cool etc.)!

More Lost Larsons

I thought I share an interesting postscript about the Larson article I did for the last issue of the Overstreet Comic Book Quarterly (issue #6). After the article came out, Lamont Larson's hometown newspaper in Nebraska asked if they could reprint the Larson article. I naturally gave my permission (as did Overstreet Publications). In early January, I received my copies (they actually "serialized" it into two parts) of the Wausa Gazette. One actually had a cover of Capt. Marvel prominently displayed.

About two weeks later I received a letter

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Dr. #13's Star Spangled Twilight...

The last issues of a title are often among the most interesting, especially if that title ended its run in the early 1950s and catered to the style and tone of what had become the most popular comics genre on the market back then... fantasy/horror! Of course if the company was DC, it was guaranteed that the horror emphasis would be minimal. But starting with *Star Spangled* #122 (November, 1951) the short but interesting career of Dr. Terry Thirteen began.

The concept of a "ghost breaker", a detective who specializes in debunking "spiritual" phenomena is fairly common in comics. So actually the Dr. Thirteen stories aren't really fantasy either... they're more accurately described as "crime" yarns which feature crooks working as phony psychics as a part of some nefarious pseudo-supernatural con game.

The Ghost Breaker series ran from #122 through #130 (July, 1952). And, true to DC's mild-mannered soul, the title didn't really die, but merely metamorphosed into *Star Spangled War Stories* with #131 (August, 1952), and under that title continued as one of DC's "big five" war titles for another 25 years.

The nine appearances of Dr. Thirteen were the lead story in each issue, and the cover feature as well. Ghost Breaker wrested that spot away from Tomahawk, who had, in turn taken it from Robin The Boy Wonder with issue #96. Each of these cover "take-overs" nicely demonstrates the succession of post-war genres that superseded the top dog position enjoyed by the superheroes for a golden decade. Issues #123-130 also feature Captain Compass (a seafaring sleuth) closed the book.

Star Spangled #122 fittingly offers the origin of the Ghost Breaker. Seems that Terry Thirteen's family tree contains a number of martyrs slain for their too-advanced scientific theories... this Terry's father explains to him one day as Terry approaches adulthood. The father is determined to foster enough logic and common sense in his son to always allow him to see past the seemingly supernatural. He proposes that they conduct a test in the event of his (the father's) death: five years after that date Terry will be alone in the family home and try to contact the dead spirit of his father. Well, comes the day, and Dr. Thirteen is alone at night talking to the portrait of the old man above the mantle. When he hears his father's voice in answer, echoing through the deserted

STAR SPANGLED COMICS #122 ©DC **(Nov 1951) In the Ghost Breaker's introductory episode Dr. Thirteen must confront the ghost of his father.**

house, it sorely tries his skepticism, but Terry finally realizes that this too is a hoax, a final test his father arranged.

Issue #122 took the "democratic approach" of giving each of the three stars an eight-page slot. Robin's story, "The Bad Boy of Gotham City", is a effective entry luridly rendered by the great Jim Mooney. Robin wants to help a juvenile delinquent that everyone else has given up on. As Dick Grayson explains to Bruce Wayne - "He's an orphan like I am, only no Bruce Wayne came along to help him..." The kid's older crook "pal" tells him to take a chance and hang around Robin because he can then discover Robin's secret identity and use that knowledge against him. Robin takes the lad camping, and one night the kid uses knock-out drops on Robin then takes pictures of him unmasked. Only after Robin risks his own life to save him in a forest fire does the kid see that Robin's the kind of guy you want on your side, and he ends up confessing and giving him the camera.

by Pat S. Calhoun

The Tomahawk tale is an excellent yarn about a dog that gives its life avenging its master's death, killing the killer and saving Tomahawk's life in the process. Fred Ray's "old-fashioned" art style is a perfect match for this marvelous 18th-century character. This mixture of a fantastic detective, a (young) costume hero, and a frontier fighter made a nice blend, a fine example of the kind of range the old anthology titles could provide.

Star Spangled #123 (December, 1951) pits Dr. Thirteen against a maker of voodoo dolls who wants to extort money from people by threatening to stick pins into magic miniatures of themselves. But the Ghost Breaker pokes a few holes in the plan. The Robin adventure features that colorful recurring villain, Crazy Quilt, while the Tomahawk offering boasts an appearance by none other than General George Washington. Several other of the Tomahawk yarns in the later issues focus on his and Dan Hunter's contributions to the Revolutionary War effort... all are four-color classics of Americana. In this one Tomahawk and some allies transport a load of gunpowder through British-occupied territory while disguised as Native Americans. Tomahawk employs a good knowledge of nature, using plants to make red dye and to waterproof barrels of gunpowder. The four-page Captain Compass story is pretty cursory. It was added without shortening the three other yarns because this ish has four "extra" pages. This was when comics were changing from 52 to 36 pages

(counting covers)... In between there was a short attempt at a 44 page format. Issues #122 and #124-#129 all run the new standard 36 page count, yet #123 gave readers just a bit more.

Star Spangled #124 (January, 1952) keeps Captain Compass in the cast by reducing the Robin and Tomahawk stories to six pages each. The Ghost Breaker entry goes south of the border to investigate a mysterious Aztec structure called "Suicide Tower". This adventure in Mexico is signed by Leonard Starr who did the art on the series and currently draws Little Orphan Annie for the newspapers. The Robin outing is also fun and deals with that classic Dynamic Duo topic... escape artistry.

Star Spangled COMICS
Featuring the GHOST BREAKER in "SUICIDE TOWER!"
I... CAN'T... RESIST... I MUST... JUMP...
"YES, JUMP, DR. THIRTEEN! DEATH IS SO SWEET!"

The bogus "blind" man, supposedly led about by a ghost dog, in the Dr. Thirteen mystery in *Star Spangled* #125 (February, 1952) is pretty easy to see through. Top honors this issue go to Captain Compass, who agrees to sail a Hollywood chap around and prove that certain maritime maneuvers are possible for an upcoming film. It makes a good "labors of Hercules" tale and culminates in an escape from the treacherous Sargasso Sea.

STAR SPANGLED COMICS #124 ©DC ABOVE: (Jan 1952) Dr. Thirteen sets out to prove that there is no supernatural force behind the mysterious deaths from "Suicide Tower".

STAR SPANGLED COMICS #126 ©DC AT RIGHT: (Mar 1952) "The Phantom of Paris" offers skullduggery on stage in the grand tradition.

Star Spangled #126 (March, 1952) opens with one of the best Ghost Breaker yarns of the series. Entitled "The Phantom of Paris" it involves masked maniacs and murder at the opera... and is done to a convincing turn. The Robin story challenges both the Boy Wonder and the reader with a puzzle in the Bat-Cave. This story, like several other in the Boy Wonder series, contains one of those "What do you think, reader?" panels right before the payoff clue is revealed. And Tomahawk is presented (by General Washington) with a finely wrought hatchet fashioned by Paul Revere. This handsome weapon itself becomes a main character in this satisfying six-pager.

Dr. Thirteen contends with a crook who seems to have the ability to astral project his spirit self and commit crimes while his physical self remains in custody in *Star Spangled* #127 (April, 1952). Even the more predictable entries in the series offer a fascinating examination of how big a gap can come between appearance and reality. Captain Compass and Robin both come off smooth but a trifle flat this time around, despite Batman's guest appearance with the Boy Wonder. It's Tomahawk who steals the show with a Yankee scheme that thwarts British troops while pretending to amuse them by staging a play.

The Ghost Breaker story in *Star Spangled* #128 (May, 1952) is a good one. Terry falls prey to the wiles of a woman who claims to awake for a few weeks every hundred years to dazzle the current crop of males. Terry takes her to a museum to test her knowledge of history, and she passes his test. Let's just say that, in this one, Terry needs the help of his fiancee Marie to break the spell of the "immortal" enchantress.

Captain Compass also shines as a storm off the African coast forces him into port. While he's off board his ship gets stolen by pirates, and the only vessel to pursue them in is a newly restored nineteenth-century Spanish Man O' War. Pursue he does, and, with the help of a crazy cannon marksman, they rout the pirates.

Robin is on target this issue too and features the obscure classic villain Mr. 50-50. Appearing in half-blackface, Mr. 50-50's theory is that a sucker should always get an even break. Thus decisions are made

by flipping a coin (50% odds) or cutting a deck of cards to over or under an eight (50% odds) etc. Even more amazingly, Robin escapes from the "impossible trap" 50-50 puts him in by a genuinely clever ploy, and we know how rare that is!

Star Spangled #129 (June, 1952) has poor Terry "demoted" from Dr. Thirteen to Mr. Thirteen. "The Human Orchids" is not such a great yarn either. DC turned out a lot of product, and a lot of it was pretty good, but a lot of it was not so hot either. Robin's "The Magic Key" is a winner. By the time it comes to the reader "challenge" to match wits with the Boy Wonder, he has presented all the clues clearly. The two "solution" panels were even printed upside-down so as not to be so easily seen beforehand. I certainly couldn't figure it, but after all was said and done, I was not only impressed by Robin's deductive skills but learned something in the process - tough to beat. And Captain Compass comes through as well- going undercover to hire on as a crewman on a ship that's out to work an insurance scam.

Star Spangled #130 (July, 1952) closes out the Ghost Breaker's run with his finest case - a whole town that's afraid of the number 13. The one person in town who stands to profit from this fear sets out to kill Mr. Thirteen before he figures out the score; that makes this story ultra-suspenseful as well as ingenious. Robin puts in a good performance on his last solo - coping with the temporary deafness that results from a close call with a hand-grenade. Captain Compass also navigates a nice finale by piloting a restored Nazi war vessel from Germany back to the USA. As a bad storm buckles some hull plates and the ship starts taking on water, he makes a heroic trip back and uncovers a slick smuggling scheme.

The Tomahawk story is also brilliant, making this last issue a four-star special. "The Battling Balladeer" is a Yankee rhymester who writes verses that make the British look like buffoons. When this poet gets arrested Tomahawk and Dan come to his defense by staging the hilarious incidents of the poem so that the author can't be convicted of libel. When they pull it off it makes the Redcoats doubly ridiculous. And the ending, with the charming "Ballad of Tomahawk" and Tomahawk and Dan's comments on the bravery and value of one who fights with pen and ink, is an outstanding argument both for poetry and freedom- bravo!

This is one of my favorite DC runs of all time. Each of the four strips had a couple of excellent stories, several other solid entries, and very few less than passable. And the packaging was consummate early 1950s anthology - with fantasy genre covers (by Bill Ely) and a wide variety of features inside. It is a distinct nine-issue entity and is the final chapter of the title that premiered the likes of Newsboy Legion, Robotman, and Tomahawk.

And the Ghost Breaker was a good character... he rode the genre trend of the day all the way to the final issue of one of DC's original anthology titles... and ended the series on a high note! ■

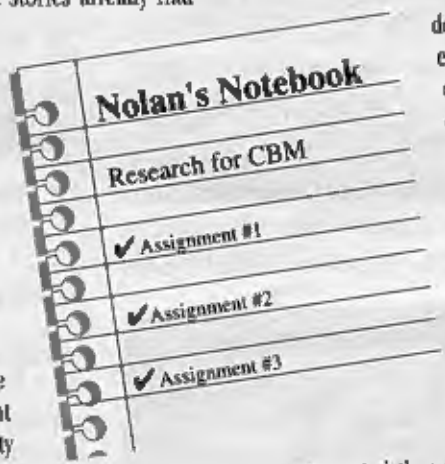
STAR SPANGLED #130 (Nov 1951) ©DC
The Ghost Breaker's final appearance is the best story of the series: "The Haunted Town".

Pat S. Calhoun has been collecting, researching, and appreciating comic books since the early 1960s, is Author of several Overstreet Price Guide articles, and is a nationally recognized comic book historian.

Fearsome Fawcetts of the 50s

During the last year of their existence, three of the most mainstream heroes of the Golden Age of Comics were featured in some of the most esoteric period pieces in comics history... Captain Marvel battles the Red Crusher ... Captain Marvel Junior faces Vampira the Korean Queen of Terror ... Mary Marvel meets the Red Vampire ... the Marvel Family fights the Mightiest Mongol.

Even many longtime Golden Age collectors are only vaguely aware of the truly bizarre villains the Marvel Family contended with from late 1952 to mid-1953. Few if any of the 38 late Fawcett "horror" stories involving the Marvel Family have ever been reprinted... they wouldn't have passed the Comics Code in the 1970s when DC was reprinting the adventures of the Mighty Marvels in *Shazam*! More to the point, these stories already had become so dated and "politically incorrect" that even the readers of 20 years ago wouldn't have recognized these odd tales as remotely resembling the usual adventures of the World's Mightiest Mortals.



Twenty-one of the thirty-eight fearsome Fawcetts feature various horror themes; the other 17 deal with the terrors of the Korean War and villains that literally have to be seen to be believed. One important element of their general unfamiliarity to most collectors is that the late Fawcett issues are truly scarce. In fact, several are so hard to find they can be accurately classified as rare (an often misused term when discussing hard-to-find material).

As an example, when is the last time you saw a copy of *Whiz Comics* #153 (January, 1953)? There are likely 40 to 50 copies of most of World War II issues in existence for every remaining copy of *Whiz* #153. The cover features Captain Marvel battling the Grim Reaper (complete with scythe) and wouldn't be out of place in any horror collection. In contrast to the cover, the story is a marvelous combination of the macabre and the whimsical, as Captain Marvel battles a mad scientist who invents a machine that turns people transparent so that only their bones are visible. In one campy yet classic panel, a couple of "skeletons" sitting on a moonlit bench exchange sweet nothings: "Even your bones are lovely, Sweetheart" to which the other replies, "Oh, Hubert! You say the sweetest things!"

But most of the horrors the Marvels faced in their final year weren't nearly so whimsical. Some contained the ultimate social horror... caustic and hateful Asian racial stereotypes that, for the most part, make them fascinating and sometimes shocking collectibles. Others pitted the Mighty Marvels against "horrifying" villains... the story concepts for which were no doubt influenced by the numerous early 1950s horror and war comics. Both elements mixing with Golden Age heroes "stranded" in the 1950s make these issues "odd" period pieces that almost belong in their own "sub-genre".

Even though horror themes dominated many comic titles of the early 1950s the Marvels were the only super heroes to be so consistently influenced by the Korean War (1950-53). No references to Korea appeared in DC's remaining super hero comics. As Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman battled out-of-this-world villains at an ever increasing rate, Communists were clearly out of bounds to the "house that Superman built". (Some have suggested that this was because DC had already taken steps to curb excessive violence and gore in all of its titles in anticipation of the Code.)

Ignoring DC's tame yet safe approach, Quality Comics kept the Blackhawks consistently in combat with Communism and Marvel/Atlas depicted Captain America, the Human Torch, and Sub-Mariner battling Communism during the short Marvel revival of the early to mid 1950s... but it was generally too late for stories to use Korean themes in the 23 Atlas super hero revival issues.

Captain Marvel, Captain Marvel Junior, and Mary Marvel, however, somehow found themselves in the thick of the Korean conflict during the final year of Fawcett's period as a comic book publisher. (The last Fawcett's comics appeared on the stands late in 1953 and were dated January, 1954... just before the company gave up comics to concentrate on its far more profitable magazines and paperback books.)

BY MICHELLE NOLAN

CBM Checklist: The Fearsome Fawcetts

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADV.

- ☐ #138 (Nov 1952) - "The Haunted Armor" (6 pgs.); "The World's Maddest Ghost" (Sivana, 7 pgs.)
- ☐ #139 (Dec 1952) - "The Red Crusher" (7 pgs.); "The Spider's Doom" (6 pgs.)
- ☐ #140 (Jan 1953) - "The Hand Of Horror" (8 pgs.); "The Mongol Blood Drinkers" (The Scarlet Vampire, 6 pgs)
- ☐ #141 (Feb 1953) - "The Prehistoric Zombies" (King Kull, 8 pgs.); "The Hideous Headhunter" (6 pgs.)
- ☐ #142 (Mar 1953) - "The Tiger Terror" (Mr. Tawny vs. The Were-Tiger, 7 pgs.); "Red Lightning Blitz" (The Red Crusher, 8 pgs.)
- ☐ #143 (Apr 1953) - "The Horror Hunt" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #144 (May 1953) - "The Fatal Fog" (The Red Crusher), 9 pgs.
- ☐ #145 (Jun 1953) - "World Of Giant Rats" (10 pgs.)
- ☐ #146 (Jul 1953) - "The Unholy Spider" (6 pgs.)
- ☐ #147 (Aug 1953) - "Riddle Of The Space Reds" (7 pgs.); "The Vampire Burglar" (6 pgs.)

CAPTAIN MARVEL JUNIOR

- ☐ #115 (Nov 1952) - "The Thousand-Eyed Idol Of Doom" (7 pgs.); "The Mad Mongol Monster" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #116 (Dec 1952) - "Vampira, The Korean Queen Of Terror" (6 pgs.)
- ☐ #117 (Jan 1953) - "The Werewolf Of London" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #118 (Apr 1953) - "The Hammer Of Hate" (The Mad Mongol Monster, 7 pgs.)
- ☐ #119 (Jun 1953) - "The Regiment That Was Afraid To Fight" (7 pgs.)

MARVEL FAMILY

- ☐ #77 (Nov 1952) - "The Threat To The Junior U.N." (King Kull the Beastman, 72 pgs.)
- ☐ #78 (Dec 1952) - "The Red Star Of Death" (The Red Vulture, 20 pgs.)
- ☐ #79 (Jan 1953) - "The Dynasty Of Horror" (The Mad Mummy, 20 pgs.)
- ☐ #80 (Feb 1953) - "The Great Red Brain" (11 pgs.); "The Space Ghoul" (5 pgs.)
- ☐ #81 (Mar 1953) - "The Mightiest Mongol" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #82 (April 1953) - "The Fantastic Freezing Furies" (17 pgs.); "The Beast Battalion" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #83 (May 1953) - "The Flying Skull" (8 pgs)
- ☐ #85 (Jul 1953) - "The Primate Plot" (17 pgs.); Captain Marvel Junior in "Vampira's Beast Of The Battlefield" (8 pgs.)
- ☐ #86 (Aug 1953) - "The World Wrecker" (King Kull, 17 pgs.)

MASTER COMICS

- ☐ #132 (Feb 1953) - "Captain Marvel Junior And The Note From Nowhere" (6 pgs.)
- ☐ #133 (Apr 1953) - "Captain Marvel Junior And The Living Dead" (6 pgs.)

WHIZ COMICS

- ☐ #153 (Jan 1953) - "Captain Marvel And The Death Horror" (7 pgs.)
- ☐ #154 (Apr 1953) - "Captain Marvel and Sivana's Monster World" (7 pgs.); Doctor Death hosts a horror story... "Pardon My Dust" (5 pgs.)
- ☐ #155 (Jun 1953) - "Captain Marvel Battles The Legend Horror" (7 pgs.); Doctor Death hosts a horror story... "The Hero's Spirit" (5 pgs.)

Marvel Gore

Although Captain Nazi in the Captain Marvel Junior stories during World War II gave a few moms pause for thought, real gore was a rarity. That is until late in 1952. Earlier that year, Fawcett had begun providing the first hints of the switch to horror themes with occasional stories such as "Ghost Island" (*Marvel Family* #71), "The Hissing Horror" (*Marvel Family* #74), "The Panther Man's Trap" (*Master Comics* #128), and "The Horror Dimension" (*Captain Marvel Junior* #107). But these, for the most part, were satirical or lighter-hearted horror stories, just as Captain Marvel's occasional encounters with witches had been. But the stories of the Fawcett heroes began to take on a much grimmer tone (guaranteed to scare younger readers) beginning with issues dated November, 1952.

Some of the more notable of these issues include: *Captain Marvel* #138 (November, 1952) through #147 (August, 1953); *Captain Marvel Junior* #115 (November, 1952) through #119 (June, 1953, the last issue); *The Marvel Family* #77 (November, 1952) through #85 (July, 1953); *Whiz Comics* #151 (November, 1952) through #155 (June, 1953, the last issue); and *Master Comics* #132 (February, 1953) and #133 (April, 1953, the last issue).

With the signing of the Korean armistice in July, 1953, the final issues of *Captain Marvel* (#148-#150) and *The Marvel Family* (#86-#89) returned to a tamer tone. But in most of the 31 issues of the five titles listed above, the Marvel Family members fought one monstrous foe after another, several of them more than once, and almost all of the covers had a horror terror war theme.

Some Fawcett fans and creators have lamented this trend. The late DC Comics editor E. Nelson Bridwell, in his introduction to the book *Shazam! From the 40's to the 70's*, wrote, "In the early fifties, EC came along, taking the lead with horror and war comics — and, unhappily, Fawcett decided to follow suit with the Marvels."

(Perhaps Bridwell's distaste for the Marvel Family horror stories accounts for his inexplicable oversight in the same introduction, saying Captain Marvel had been missing since 1952. As most collectors know, he last appeared in his own book in issue #150, November, 1953... and in *The Marvel Family* #89, January, 1954. To show how these things can get compounded, DC recently submitted publicity material to the *Comics Buyers Guide* concerning Jerry Ordway's new Shazam! series. The author(s) again used 1952 as the date Captain Marvel vanished, probably using the book's introduction as a reference, albeit an inaccurate one.)

At any rate, many readers in 1953 scarcely recognized the Marvels as they fought one cruel Communist horror after another along with a series of weird menaces (see checklist).

The "height of horror" for Captain Marvel occurred in issue #140, January, 1953. In it he fought The Scarlet Vampire in Korea in a truly gruesome story entitled "The Mongol Blood Drinkers". He also battled "The Hand of Horror" (the disembodied hand of a bog monster) in the same issue.

In #141 Captain Marvel returned to Korea to meet "The Hideous Headhunter"... a fiend who flipped a bag of human heads at the horrified Captain! "And there are Commie heads as well as American!" Captain Marvel moans, holding his own head as severed heads come tumbling out of the bag. "So the double atrocity claims are true! He hunts any man, Red or Yank!" For those who collect off-the-wall comics, it doesn't get any "better" (?) than this!

Well... actually it does... In the very next issue of *Captain Marvel Adventures* (#142), Mr. Tawny, the Talking Tiger, a Fawcett concept inspired by sheer whimsy, meets a "Were-Tiger" (whew)! The usually comical and amusing Mr. Tawny actually drives a stake through the heart of the "Were-Tiger".

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADV. #140
(Jan 1953) The Hand of Horror & The Mongol Blood Drinkers.

WHIZ COMICS #153
(Jan 1953) Captain Marvel and the Death Horror.

CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.#118
(Apr 1953) On facing page- The Hammer of Hate.

This is another classic that has to be seen to be believed.

Although the North Koreans and Communist Chinese were demonized in numerous war comics, only Fawcett came up with Asiatic super villains of the 1950s that were every bit as horrible as anything seen during World War II (when negative Asian stereotypes were clearly labeled as Japanese, since all other Asians were supposedly on the side of the Allies). At least one member of the Marvel Family fought the following roster Asian menaces: The Red Vulture, The Great Red Brain (a takeoff on the movie "Donovan's Brain"), The Mightiest Mongol, The Red Crusher, The Beast Battalion, The Scarlet Vampire, The Mad Mongol Monster, and Vampira the Korean Queen of Terror.

[illegible] FAMILY #78 (Dec 1952) The Red Star of Death (The Red Vulture).

King Kull the Beastman, a villain who had been appearing for several years before the Marvels took the leap into 50s horror, also figured into several stories that either spilled over onto the horror column or bordered on it (an admittedly subjective list). The story in *The Marvel Family* #77 is listed in the horror category if only because of the strikingly surreal cover. This interesting entry shows a giant blood-drenched fist, seemingly that of a Communist officer. The fist actually belongs to King Kull, and is from a three-part story entitled "The Threat To The Junior U.N." Regardless of whether King Kull, drew his origins from the earlier pulp magazine character created by Robert E. Howard, his Fawcett incarnation seemed more parody than anything else.

One of the oddest stories of the horror series was published in *The Marvel Family* #79, January, 1953. "The Dynasty of Horror" featured The Mad Mummy, a character played completely straight in a 20-page, three-part tale — yet played totally for laughs on the cover. It was as though cover artist C.C. Beck either wasn't aware of the grim nature of this story, or else put through a comical cover in protest. Beck often was quoted as saying he had little use for the switch to horror in *The Marvel Family* stories. Whatever the reason, any parent who normally didn't allow his or her children to purchase horror comics, might have been confounded by a cover that easily disguised the contents.

Like DC Comics, Fawcett had built a reputation by providing (as the circle at the top of the front page of every comic declared) "Wholesome Entertainment" and "Approved Reading." But the list of Fawcett comics (next to the so-called seal of approval), never mentions any of the five horror titles or any of the numerous Fawcett romance titles. One might presume that these, by virtue of their absence from the list, weren't wholesome. And, indeed, they weren't!

From the standpoint of today's collector, Fawcett produced some of the grisliest horror comics and many of the sexist romance comics in history — and most are beautifully illustrated.

From a historical view of the era, many collectors have the mistaken impression that horror comics played a larger place in comic book history than they actually do.

Certainly no one can deny the huge impact horror made, leading as it did to the creation of the Comics Code late in 1954. But the genre itself was basically just a five-year phenomenon (1950-54)! Following a few one-shot and two-shot comics in the late 1940s, the first regularly published horror comic was ACG's *Adventures Into The Unknown* which debuted in the fall of 1948. The second was Timely's *Marvel Tales* which first appeared with No. 93 in August of 1949, a continuation of the failed super hero title *Marvel Mystery*.

Fawcett's first horror titles didn't appear until more than two years later — *This Magazine Is Haunted* #1 (October 1951), and *World's Beyond* #1 (November 1951, the title changed to *Worlds Of Fear* with #2). Then followed *Beware Terror Tales* (May, 19[illegible]), *Unknown Worlds* (June, 1952, changing to *Strange Stories from Another World* with #2), and *Strange Suspense Stories* (June, 1952).

Fawcett's horror comics are notable for occasional stories by the "atmospheric" and accomplished Bob Powell and George Evans. But the whole series of titles totaled only 42 issues, barely more than the total number of horror-themed issues of *The Marvel Family*.

In the Gerber *Photo-Journal*, all of the Fawcett Marvel horror issues rate scarcity indexes of 5 (200-1,000 copies in existence), 6 (50-200 copies), or 7 (20-50 copies). I'm not sure I agree that they're all that scarce, but there's no question all of them seem uncommon at best with a few extremely difficult to locate.

It's a sure bet that the "Fearsome Fawcetts" didn't sell nearly as well as the earlier and tamer material had only a few years earlier. Perhaps in the proud history of Fawcett comics and Captain Marvel, that's the biggest horror of all. ■

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950s comic books in the U.S. and has contributed volumes of data to the Overstreet Price Guide.

mister fantastic

VIRGIL FINLAY

The greatest illustrator from the Golden Age of Science Fiction made his mark in pulps, magazines and –surprise– comics too!

BY ROGER HILL

During the Golden Age of science fiction and fantasy illustration there emerged several young and talented artists who capably put forth an unparalleled amount of dedication to their craft their imaginations as gifted as their artistic talents. Today they remain bright stars in the galaxy of nostalgic pioneers leading the way for other artists to follow.

One of these bright stars, whose light continues to illuminate the hearts and minds of science fiction and fantasy aficionados around the globe, was Virgil Finlay. Here was an artist who devoted his life to art. During his thirty-five-year career his productivity was astounding. Without a single lapse in quality, detail, or creativity, Virgil Finlay's credits include more than 2,500 interior drawings, 200 cover paintings, an untold number of unpublished sketches. And although his work in the comic book world was brief, the cherished panels he created are full of wondrous detail and beauty, and highly sought after by collector and fan alike.

His work is unlike anything seen before or since. To put it mildly- Finlay was unique! His patience in using the highly-detailed techniques of stipple, scratch board, lines, crosshatch, and soft charcoal or pencil, eventually elevated him to esteem and recognition as the most popular illustrator ever to work in the science fiction field. As the world of fantasy art becomes more and more challenging with computer graphics and photo realism, readers have come to expect more elegant and realistic artistic achievements. Yet the great Finlay has already met much of that challenge. It is in that light that we take a look at some of the work of a truly talented man. An artist who created great imagery using the "old-fashioned methods: dot by dot, line by line - this was the genius of Virgil Finlay.

Beginnings

Virgil Warden Finlay was born in Rochester, New York, on July 23, 1914. He had started to draw in grammar school, and by the age of 14 had exhibited several anatomy drawings at a gallery in Rochester. Upon entering high

school, he participated in as many art classes as was allowed and also became quite an athlete in several sports- excelling in pole vaulting. He dabbled with poetry but mostly followed his artistic instincts, which led him to study all mediums of the arts. Although he had great interests in easel painting, he soon discovered the eloquence of doing detailed pen and ink work on scratch board and other types of paper. Finlay began utilizing a technique of "dot stipple" to create beautiful images of an almost photographic quality. The stipple technique is a slow pains-taking method, whereby the artist - using a lithographic pen point- would literally place hundreds and even thousands of ink dots on the paper's surface... precisely controlling all contrasting shades of light and dark. While the results could be stunning, the time and patience required for the process was simply not cost-effective for most professional illustrators of the time. Finlay also employed many other techniques: straight line work, crosshatching, and soft shading... which worked best on ross-board or pebbleboard. While in high school Finlay also experimented with woodcuts and sculpting.

Throughout the early 1930s he took a few night courses at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and upon finishing high school, enrolled in WPA classes studying portraiture, anatomy, and landscape. Early influences on Finlay included Gustave Dore, the French artist, along with such pen and ink masters as Harry Clark, Heinrich Kley, Norman Lindsay, and even Winsor McCay (the celebrated cartoonist creator of Little Nemo in Slumberland). He also appreciated Rembrandt and had the greatest respect for Picasso. Finlay worked at a variety of odd jobs during the early depression years and occasionally did portrait work when he could find it. Even before finishing high school Finlay had taken an interest in stories of fantasy and the supernatural and was reading *Weird Tales* magazine on a regular basis.

But a few things about *Weird Tales* annoyed Finlay, the most bothersome being the "sub-standard" interior illustration. He decided to do something about it during the

Self-portrait of the artist, executed two years before embarking on a career that would lead to becoming one of the greatest science fiction and fantasy illustrators.

summer of 1935, and submitted several drawings to *Weird Tales*' editor Farnsworth Wright. Wright was receptive to Finlay's work but had reservations about how well the fine v-detailed stipple drawings would reproduce on the cheap pulp paper. After a test proof copy was made Wright concluded that while some detail was lost during the process, the end result was still good enough to proceed. Finlay's first published drawings appeared in the December 1935 issue illustrating stories by Paul Ernst, Edmond Hamilton, and Clark Ashton Smith. Wright had the ability to recognize talent when he saw it, and he immediately gave Finlay additional assignments. With the February 1936 issue Finlay became a regular contributor to *Weird Tales*. Readers were impressed by the new artist's imaginative approach to drawing and his attention to detail, and he soon became a fan favorite.

©Weird Tales Limited

The February 1937 issue of Weird Tales featured the artist's first published cover painting- a scene from Seabury Quinn's "the Globe of Memories"

Even the legendary *Weird Tales* contributor (and celebrated author) H. P. Lovecraft thought highly of Finlay's work. During correspondence with Finlay, Lovecraft gave him the nickname "Monstro, Baron of Kohl." In the December 1936 issue of *Weird Tales* Finlay got his first chance to illustrate a Lovecraft story (entitled "The Haunter of the Dark"). Later in 1939, Finlay created the dust jacket design for a collection of Lovecraft's finest stories called The Outsider and Others (Arkham House's first hardcover book). Finlay's design for the dust jacket so captured the horror within its pages that it is often acclaimed as one of the greatest and most frightening images to ever grace a Lovecraft book.

Monstro, Baron of Kohl

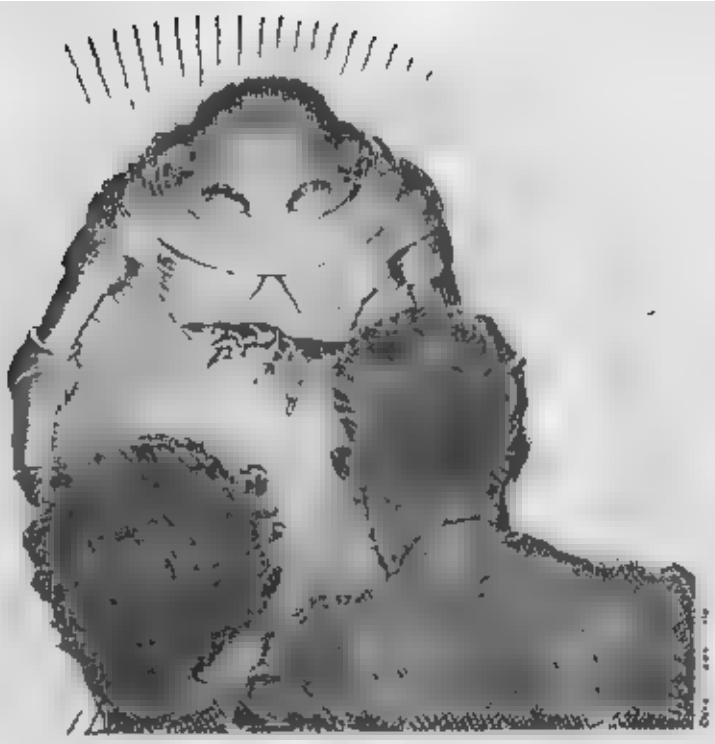
Because of requests by enthusiastic readers, Finlay made his cover debut with the February 1937 issue of *Weird Tales*. The historic cover illustrated Seabury Quinn's "The Globe of Memories." This first cover was well-received by readers, as evidenced by the steady stream of wonderful fantasy and horror illustrations published in the magazine from 1937-1940.

In late 1937 while still living in Rochester, Finlay was contacted by the great fantasy author and newspaper journalist A. Merritt, who was then serving as editor of *The American Weekly* (a newspaper supplement published by William Randolph Hearst). While Merritt was somewhat skeptical because of the young artist's age (he was only 23) he was quite impressed with Finlay's obviously superb contributions to *Weird Tales* and so offered Finlay a salary of $80 a week. Shortly thereafter in November 1938 Finlay moved to New York and married Beverly Stiles a girlfriend from Rochester that he had known since childhood.

At *The American Weekly* he became a "feature fiction illustrator" (1937 to 1943) and contributed more than 250 illustrations. His first work there was a six-week serialized story entitled "The Ark of Fire" by John Hawkins. "Ark remains one of his most popular and memorable endeavors. All together, Finlay worked for *The American Weekly* (off and on) for fourteen years. He also continued to produce drawings for *Weird Tales* illustrating stories by noted fantasy authors like Frank Belknap Long (pseudonym for brothers Earl and Otto Binder) Robert Bloch, David H. Keller, Robert E. Howard, and Jack Williamson.

In 1939, when Argosy decided to reprint A. Merritt's "Seven Footprints to Satan" (one of his most popular novels) the elderly Merritt arranged for Finlay to illustrate the serialized story. From 1939 to 1943 Finlay provided Argosy with numerous cover paintings as well as black and white "interiors." Also in 1939, following the advice of his close friend Henry Kuttner (another fine fantasy writer). Finlay met Popular Publications editor Mort Weisinger who was impressed by Finlay's work and gave him assignments for several "pulp" titles including *Thrilling*

Wonder Stories, *Startling Stories*, and *Strange Stories*. Although these were his first efforts in science fiction magazines, reader response was overwhelming. Finlay remained a contributor to Popular Publications for 16 years. Of course Weisinger (legendary among DC comic book collectors and fans) went on to become the editor of DC's *Superman* in 1941 and eventually was promoted to Editorial Director at DC.



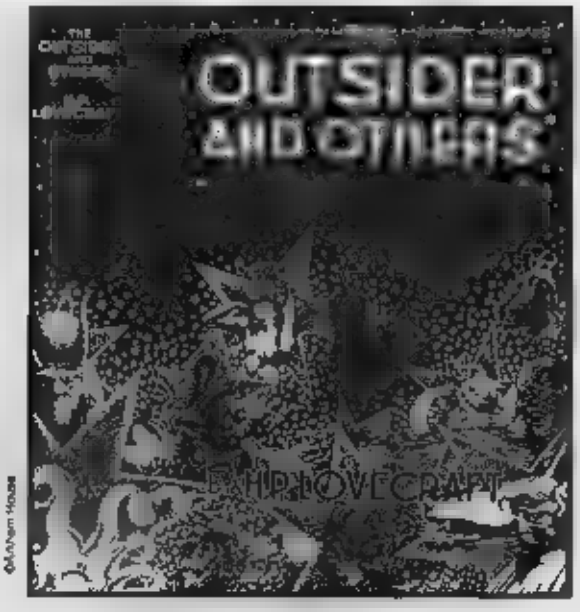
During this period of increased productivity, Finlay maintained his account with *Weird Tales*, and his staff position on The American Weekly. But in June, 1939, after his too-realistically detailed description of the Sargasso Sea, Finlay was abruptly fired via telegram by William Randolph Hearst himself. A few weeks later he was hired back to provide headings and designs for the food and home-making pages and remained there on a free-lance basis. That same year he also began contributing his talents to two new magazines that reprinted older classic fantasy and science fiction stories, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* and *Fantastic Novels*. Published by the Frank A. Munsey Company, these two magazines became major outlets for Finlay, showcasing some of the artist's finest work in both interior drawings and cover paintings. Again reader response was so overwhelming that between 1941 and 1949 the company actually issued three "portfolios" featuring many of Finlay's greatest drawings published in the two magazines, using excellent reproduction and quality paper.

Also in 1939, at the request of editor John W. Campbell, Finlay turned out his first (and last) cover painting for the prestigious *Astounding Science-Fiction* magazine published by Street and Smith. The finished painting, depicting the engine room of a spaceship, illustrated a scene from "The Luck of Ignatz", by Lester del Rey and was published on the August 1939 issue. Although Finlay had pictured the engine room perfectly with his usual fine display of detail and perspective, the final printed cover was a disaster. Unfortunately, the Street and Smith Art Director had blown-up a small area of the painting and cropped the remaining portion eliminating most of the detail that the artist had labored to achieve. Finlay himself was so disappointed over this editorial intrusion that he vowed never to work for Street and Smith again and he didn't.

In 1940, after *Weird Tales* drastically lowered their pay-rates, Finlay reluctantly tapered off his artistic work for that magazine. As much as he loved *Weird Tales*, he simply couldn't justify working for them any longer, without compromising his dedication to his craft. Nearly a decade would pass before the artist would appear there again on a regular basis. By 1942 Finlay had started to do interior illustrations for the Chicago-based Ziff-Davis Publishing Company on their two titles *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures*. His work was so well received by readers that that editor Ray Palmer eventually allowed Finlay a free hand to draw whatever scenes he wanted

Illustration for "Child of Atlantis" by Edmond Hamilton- from Weird Tales (Dec 1937).

One of Finlay's most striking cover paintings, used to illustrate A. Merritt's classic Burn Witch, Burn- from Famous Fantastic Mysteries (Jun 1942).



without a story! Then Palmer would actually have one of his staff writers write a story "around" Finlays drawings. This is an amazing footnote to Finlay's career and a profound testament to his genius.

Finlay entered the U.S. Army in June 1943 and served in World War II as both a draftsman and combat engineer. During his three-year stint in the service (much to the chagrin of many science fiction and fantasy enthusiasts) his work almost totally disappeared from the pages of all the leading magazines. During his absence, other artists (including Hannes Bok and Lawrence Sterne Stevens) were brought in to fill the void. Both of those two gentlemen would go on to carve out significant reputations and fan-followings of their own in the years to come.

At the time of his discharge in 1946 Finlay returned to Rochester where his wife had been living with her parents since his departure three years earlier. The Finlay's eventually settled back into an apartment in Brooklyn, then later acquired a rental house in Levittown, New York. In 1949 their only child was born, and in 1950 the family bought a house in Westbury, New York, located at 55 Cobalt Lane.

Four-Color Finlay

After the war the field of magazine publishing experienced a major boom, and demand for Finlay's work began to grow rapidly. In less than a year after leaving the military, he was again contributing to most of the leading fantasy and science fiction magazines, and had been welcomed back once again to *The American Weekly*. Even with more work available to him than ever before, Finlay somehow found time to take on additional assignments from DC editor Whitney Ellsworth. Virgil Finlay made his comic book debut in *Real Fact Comics* #4 (September/October 1946), illustrating a two-page feature entitled "Just Imagine". This wonderful issue contained panels of scientific predictions of technological advances and ran consistently until #12 (January/February 1948). Finlay also drew the first appearance of Tommy Tomorrow, a long-lived DC space adventure hero in *Real Fact Comics* #6 (January/February 1947). As the new decade dawned, DC began its two legendary science fiction comic book titles *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery In Space* and Finlay would contribute to both. Even though DC was paying above-average comic book rates for art during this period, Finlay's time to contribute to comics was limited, and not very cost-effective. Nevertheless, his comic work produced between 1946 and 1954 remains some of the most inspired and beautiful science fiction art ever published in the four-color medium.

DC 1955

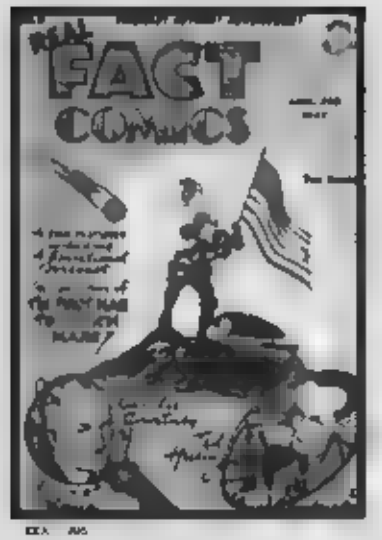
The Passing of the Pulps

Finlay's dedication to technique and hard work was beyond belief. With his incredibly slow methods of working, it's amazing that he produced such a tremendous amount of work during the late 1940s and into the early 1950s. He literally lived at his drawing table, usually putting in a sixteen-hour day, seven days a week, in order to meet the ever-present deadlines to which he subjected himself. To the enjoyment of his constantly-growing fan-following, he produced some of his finest art during these years, and at the 11th World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia in 1953 Virgil Finlay received a national science fiction art award for "Best Interior Illustrator". This prestigious award later became known as the "Hugo", and is still awarded to the top talents in the industry today.

finLay IN Space

Virgil Finlay's one and only! Avid Mystery In Space collectors have known it for years... Issue #19 contains the six page sci fi classic "The Mad Planet", the only complete Virgil Finlay drawn story ever published in comic books! Demand pressure from DC, pre-code, sci fi, art comic, and Finlay collectors has made the already scarce issue even more difficult to find!

THE MAD PLANET
MY FLARE GUN CAN'T DENT THAT ELECTRONIC BUBBLE! WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET OUR SHIP OFF THIS CRAZY WORLD!
HURRY! LOOK OUT!
THE MAD PLANET

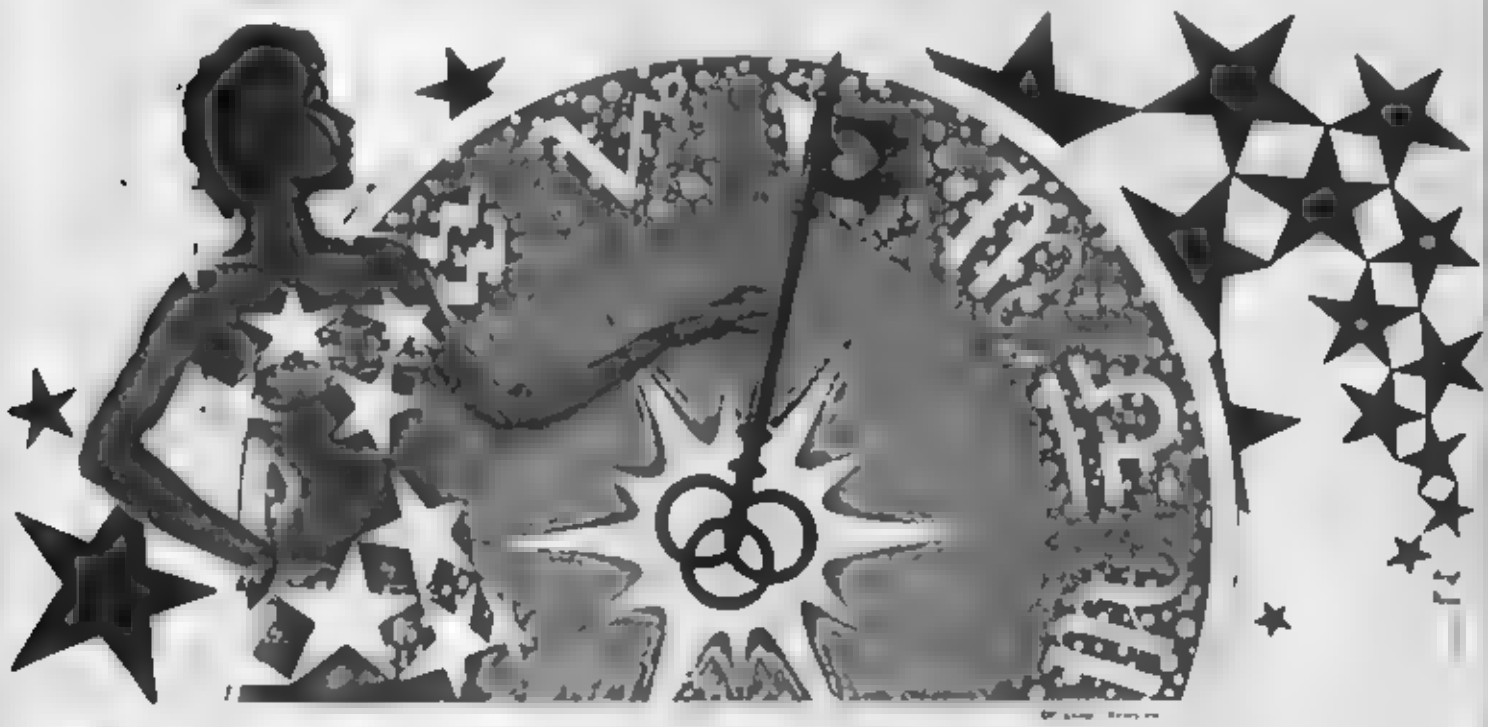


As predicted by many, the post-war publishing boom began to taper off, and by 1955 most pulp magazines had ceased publication or converted to the new smaller "digest" format. Finlay's long association with *Weird Tales* came to a close in September 1954 when the title ceased publication, and in 1955 Popular Publications cancelled all their titles (this includes *Fantastic Story Magazine*, *Startling Stories*, and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*). As the changes taking place in the publishing market escalated to severe levels, many artists soon discovered that pay rates for cover and interior art fell off drastically. Science Fiction had fallen on hard times, and some the newer digest titles even eliminated interior illustrations altogether. Even Virgil Finlay - an artist considered to be the best in his genre - was struggling to survive. In 1955 he created a design used for the back of a deck of playing cards which were sold at the 13th World Science Fiction Convention, and in 1956 he produced a dust-jacket design plus twenty interior drawings for the hardcover edition of *The Complete Book Of Space Travel* published by World Publishing Company of New York. Fortunately, during this period of recession, Popular Publications (also known as Standard) was still producing several astrology magazines, and Finlay soon found some security in illustrating for such titles as *Astrology*, *Your Daily Horoscope*, and *Everyday Astrology*. Since Popular paid much better rates than many of the science fiction digests, the artist always went the extra mile to give them some of his finest efforts.

In 1957, through the help of his good friend - and fellow science fiction historian - Sam Moskowitz, Finlay began receiving monthly cover painting assignments from the digest *Fantastic Universe Science Fiction*. In most instances the artist was allowed the freedom to create an

original cover idea of his own choosing, several of which remain classics in the science fiction field. Finlay also received occasional cover and interior assignments from *Other Worlds Science Stories*, *If - Worlds Of SF*, and *Galaxy Science Fiction*.

Association, at their annual meeting in Newark, New Jersey. Interestingly enough, it was to be Finlay's first and only appearance at a major science fiction gathering. The artist found another avenue of work available to him through the Doubleday Science Fiction Book Club, and over an



Surprisingly during the late 1950s, Finlay returned to his easel and initiated a new path of artistic experimentation in painting. Utilizing oils, watercolors, and even ceramic finishes, he began to pursue and develop an interest in abstract and impressionistic designs. Eventually, this new direction of art work found an audience, and a number of his finished canvases were sold to private collections. He also enjoyed several one-man shows over the next few years, and exhibited at various art institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

At the same time he continued to secure what work was available from the low-paying science fiction digest market. This work, along with the astrology magazines, would continue throughout the 1960s, and although the artist was never quite successful in the ever-growing paperback cover market, he did provide the covers for two paperback book collections reprinting stories from *Weird Tales* magazine. These books, titled *Weird Tales* and *Worlds Of Weird*, were published by Pyramid Books in 1964 and 1965 respectively. It was also in 1964 that Virgil Finlay was honored as the "Dean of Science Fiction Art" by the Eastern Science Fiction

eleven-year period he contributed a large number of pen and ink and monochromatic illustrations and paintings for the club publicity brochures. He also designed mailing envelopes and created the dust-wrapper painting for a hardcover edition of Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

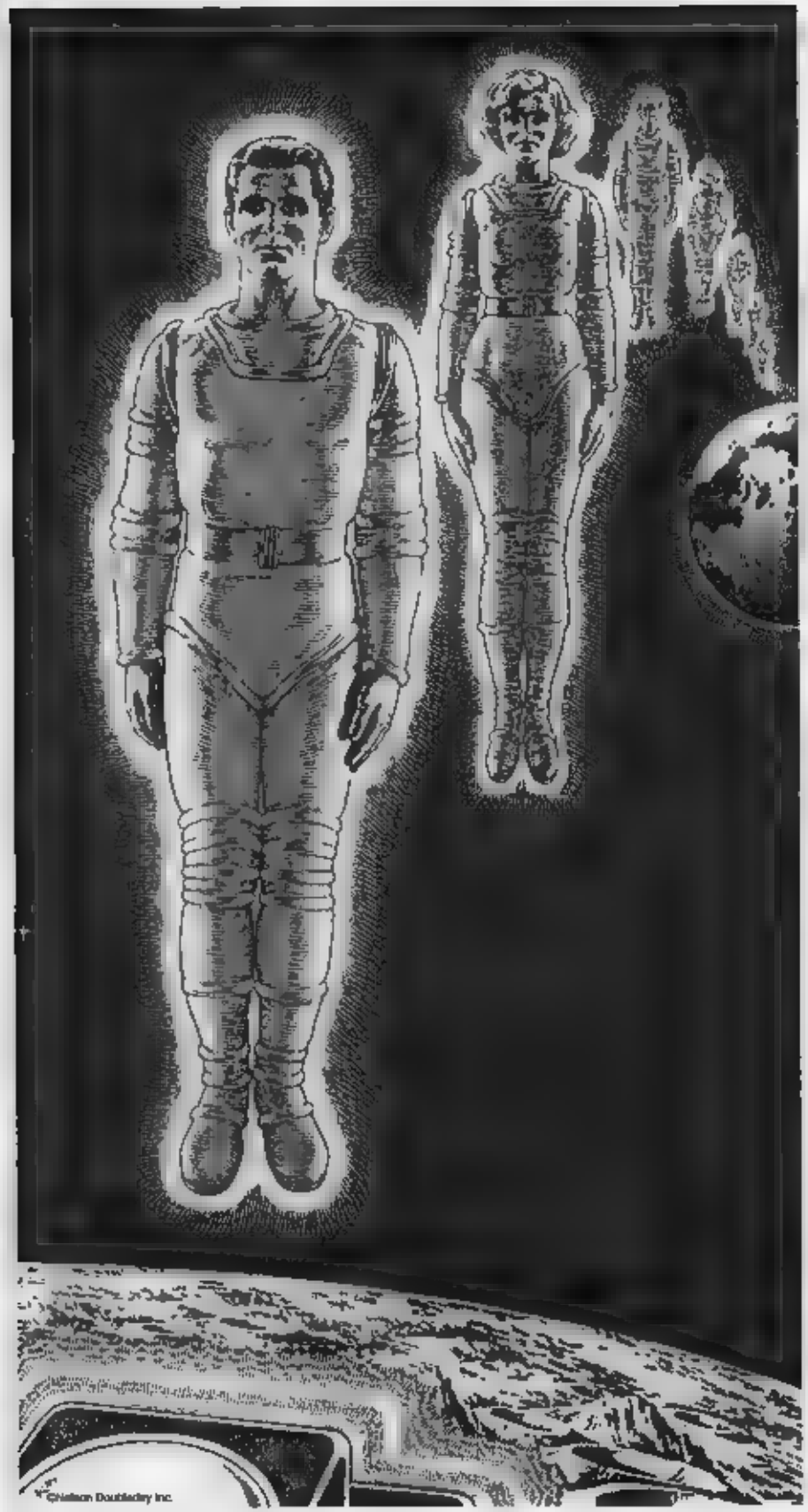
Conclusion

In early 1970 Finlay was diagnosed with cancer and underwent surgery. Throughout the rest of 1970, in spite of having to deal with considerable pain, he continued to provide cover illustrations for the astrology magazines. As a result of medical bills incurred, he eventually contacted his long-time friend, and art collector, Gerry de la Ree, who, working closely with the artist, arranged for the sale of many of his originals. Since the very beginning of his career Finlay had always tried to retrieve his originals from the various publishers. His attempts weren't always successful, but during his 35-year career he retrieved about half his total output. Finlay's pain eventually grew worse, and after returning to the hospital for further testing, it was discovered that

ABOVE: "Your Missing Key to Success" from Astrology (Aug 1957).

TOP OF OPPOSITE PAGE: The scarce and interesting covers of Real Fact #6 & #8 which contain the first and second appearances of Tommy Tomorrow.

BOTTOM OF OPPOSITE PAGE: Finlay's first comic book contribution... a two-page feature titled "Just Imagine" that delighted the readers of Real Fact #4 (Sep/Oct 1946).



he had cirrhosis of the liver. He died on January 18, 1971, at the age of 56.

His passing marked the end of an era in science fiction and fantasy illustration. There has never been another artist quite like Virgil Finlay. Others have tried to emulate his styles and techniques, but rarely did they succeed in capturing that special quality of artistic expression that is inherent in Finlay's work. His influence and importance to this genre continue to be felt and appreciated by those who have been fortunate enough to discover his genius.

Further Explorations

For those who wish to become more familiar with the work of Virgil Finlay, the author recommends the continuing series of hardcover and softcover books from Underwood-Miller Press, reprinting some of the finest Finlay illustrations of all time. So far three volumes have seen print: Virgil Finlay's *Women of the Ages*, *Virgil Finlay's Strange Science*, and *Virgil Finlay's Phantasms*.■

Editor's Note: *Of interest to original art collectors there will be a special sale of science fiction and fantasy artwork and memorabilia scheduled for auction in New York City this year. In June 1995, the day before the annual Comic Book and Art auction, Sotheby's Auction House will feature over fifty lots of original drawings and paintings by Virgil Finlay. This group of originals, spanning a period of thirty years of the artist's career, represents the largest collection of Finlay art ever offered at public auction. Additional lots in this sale will include original works by noted illustrators Frank R. Paul, Hannes Bok, Alex Schomburg, Ron Cobb, and others. The sale will also feature early runs of some of the pulp magazines these artists worked for, including Astounding Stories, Science Wonder Stories, and Amazing Stories, along with other science fiction and fantasy related memorabilia.*

Roger Hill has been reading, collecting and appreciating comic books and comic book art since his early days in Kansas. Besides being a prominent figure throughout the entire history of fandom, he contributes articles on a regular basis to his favorite APA and is a nationally recognized authority on original art and comic book history.

TEN MORE TIMELY

Timely Comics have returned! After more than a decade of generally moderate price increases demand for Timelys for the past 12 months has exploded! Traditionally the second-most collected era of Golden Age comics (after DC) and even overshadowed in the past few years by its precursor Centaur Timely currently reigns as the number-one requested company by Golden Age collectors. From New Hampshire to California, dealers report furious sales of Timelys in all grades led of course by the biggies *Captain America, Marvel Mystery, Human Torch,* and *Sub-Mariner*. This surge in interest will probably lead to more statistical and historical data about Timelys, as has been the case for the aforementioned DC and Centaur in recent years.

And so as a testament to this recent "clamor" for Timely Comics, I present ten books, which in my opinion can be accurately described as second-tier or third-tier keys relative to the history of the company. Some of my picks are somewhat more famous than others. Some are already quite expensive while others are bargains at current *Overstreet Price Guide* levels. But all (and this is the general gist of my article) are examples of important milestones in the history and development of Timely/Atlas/Marvel and a few of these gems rank with the most memorable of all Golden Age comics!

Captain America #3 (May, 1941)

This comic book may just be to Captain America, what *Detective* #31 is to Batman! It wonderfully captures just what Timely, as a company, means to Timely collectors. Its chief significance is the first cover appearance of the quintessential WWII-era antagonist, Red Skull! With the Joker and perhaps the Claw, Red Skull ranks among the pre-eminent villains of the Golden Age. (*Cap* #3 also features a Red Skull story, his second.) This is truly one of the era's best covers, combining perfect balance (Cap and Red Skull separated by a futuristic cannon poised to blast

In response to the many reader requests for more on Timelys,

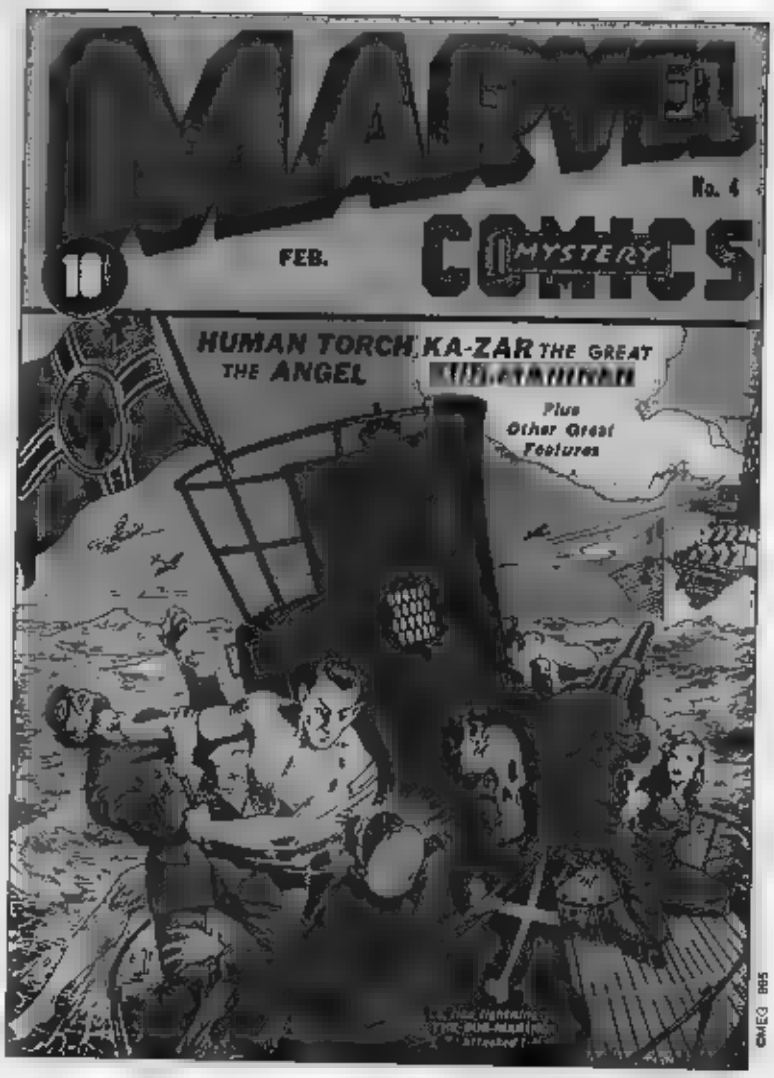
TREASURES by John T. Signorelli

Bucky and another victim into space), dynamic colors (one of only two *Caps* to sport a yellow logo block, which strikingly sets off the red and black logo), and minimal text blurb intrusion.

This is pre-eminent war-cover artist Alex Schomburg's first Captain America cover (of dozens,) and his best of the run — it features Stan Lee's first published comics work and of course contains the revolutionary art of Simon and Kirby! Whew! This book is truly Timely personified.

Marvel Mystery #4 (February, 1940)

This early Timely entry is both underrated and (yes!) undervalued! As Sub-Mariner's first cover, *Marvel Mystery* #4 is perhaps the Rodney Dangerfield of Golden Age cover firsts. Even the comprehensive *Overstreet Guide* doesn't mention this historic first! (By way of comparison, note the attention garnered by the beautiful, albeit much-less significant Arrow covers on *Funny Pages Comics*.) Because the Angel was publisher Martin Goodman's



MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS #4 The first Sub-Mariner cover in history.

CBM presents one collector's view of the lesser known Timely keys!

favorite character (go figure) he got cover billing on issues 2, 3, 6, and 8, over Sub-Mariner — so issue #4 is that much more special! The 1930's, pulp-inspired flavor of early Timelys is evident on this Schomburg cover, which depicts Sub-Mariner astride a Nazi "Death Raider" submarine. The sub menacingly flaunts a skull and-crossbones insignia, and clearly flies the hideous Nazi flag — just the second such display on a comic book cover, (after *Top-Notch* #2, one month before.) *Marvel Mystery* #4 also contains the first Electro, a character Timely historian George Olshevsky called Marvel's first, rather off-beat version of Iron Man — plus the Human Torch in his fourth appearance ever!

Value-wise, compare this book to *Fantastic Four* #4. At this writing, a Fine-condition *Marvel* #4 will run you about the same price as a VF copy of *FF* #4. Nuff said!

USA Comics #7 (March 1943)

As Golden Age becomes steadily more expensive, completing runs of titles will get more and more difficult. As a result, the cover-collecting phenomenon (whereby collectors seek outstanding individual covers of a title as opposed to the entire run) will become more and more prevalent. I predict *USA* #7 will be among those sought after as one of these choice covers.

To boost drooping sales, Timely enlisted Captain America into *USA* with issue 6. But it's #7 which features the best cover of Cap's stint in the title — a veritable Golden Age monument. Another by the great Schomburg, it's a wonder of design. A parachuting Cap, Bucky under one arm and bullet-deflecting shield on the other, descends on a kamikaze-launching Japanese aircraft carrier. As they fall amid planes and explosions, Cap's shield ensures their safety while Bucky machine-guns enemy planes. The creative and clever design is enhanced by beautiful red, white, blue, and gold colors.

This book (along with the next selection) epitomizes the spirit of Timely, pre-eminent producer of WWII-theme covers. Although I suspect a decent supply of this book exists, it's rarely offered for sale, as collectors seemingly just won't part with this emblematic Timely book.

All-Winners Comics #19 (Spring, 1942)

Another show-stopping propaganda design cover graces this truly awesome book. Drawn by Timely artist Al Avison it is considered by many to be his most outstanding cover work. This book is a recognized treasure, yet I am continually amazed at the number of collectors who are unaware of its status as a Timely icon! The best of a number of memorable *All-Winners* covers, it's still a good value at $600 or so for a Fine-condition copy.

And there's more! In addition to its unforgettable, intimidating cover portrayal of the All-Winners, issue #4 features the Human Torch by original artist Carl Burgos, Sub-Mariner by the consistently stylish Bill Everett, and Cap by Al Avison. No Timely collection is complete without this one!

Captain America #74 (Oct., 1949)

Jumping ahead several years, Timely's transition from superhero comics producer toward the crime, horror, and sci-fi genres is captured eloquently by this wonderfully eerie cover. *Cap* #74 marks the super-patriot's final Golden Age appearance, and features a cover depiction of the Red Skull dramatically different than previous portrayals of the nemesis non-pareil. Less cartoony, the Skull looms, giant, from the ethereal purple sky, below him, Cap appears to be virtually on the craggy edge of the world! This issue also marks the Red Skull's final, and perhaps most horrible, appearance until 1965. It's truly a landmark issue.

Seekers of a copy of *Cap* #74 are urged to prepare for nail-biting, possible hair-loss, and fits of depression! Be patient and vigilant, however. Although ranked "8" (11-20 existing copies) by the Gerber *Photo-Journal*, there are probably more... buried deep within collectors' vaults. (Longtime Timely expert/collector John Albemaz of Massachusetts estimates 100 or so probably exist.) Also, expect to pay a premium — I know of a low-grade copy which sold recently for five times *Guide*!

Young Men #24 (December, 1953)

Just about four years after their demise, Timely/Atlas brought Cap, Subby, and the Torch out of hibernation for a brief revival in the mid-1950's. *Young Men* was the vehicle of their return with issue 24, and each would reappear in his own book, as well as a few more issues of *Young Men* and *Men's Adventures*. *Young Men* #24 is currently experiencing widespread attention and demand, after years of relative anonymity. Dealer after dealer reports the book virtually impossible to find; when a copy turns up, it is invariably in low-grade.

Just for kicks, compare this book to *Showcase* #4, DC's revival of the Flash in 1956 (or for that matter, *Showcase* #22, or even *Brave & Bold* #34). The *Overstreet Annual* #24 price for *Young Men* #24 is $400 for a Near Mint copy, while *Showcase* #4 is immensely valuable at $18,000. Now, I don't claim these two books are of equal historic

importance, as Flash's return is widely considered the harbinger of the Silver Age. Yet, think about it... one has the return of one of DC's most popular characters, the other the 1950's reincarnation of three of Timely's.

The scarcity factor comparison is probably a toss-up, though I've seen many more copies of *Showcase* #4 at conventions and in dealer's catalogs, perhaps brought out more due to its higher value. Kind of makes you stop and think a bit! *Young Men* #24 is a Timely/Atlas/Marvel timeline landmark. My advice: hunt one down, as there's still room on the bandwagon (it just needs a treasure map!)

Daring Mystery #6 (Sept., 1940)

Simon and Kirby's second Timely cover (after *Red Raven* #1), *Daring Mystery* #6 nicely exemplifies the early style of the acclaimed comics creators. A floundering title, it made a huge leap in quality with the addition of S & K. The cover started a dramatic transition from the obvious pulp-styling of earlier issues, toward the more dynamic, trendy superhero style evident on the covers of issues 7 and 8, (#8's cover is also by S & K.)

Daring #6 features two stories by them as well: one chronicling the origin of Marvel Boy—whose glowing potential, like too many Timely creations, was never fully developed. The *Daring Mystery* issues are now considered classic "training ground" for Simon and Kirby, who would graduate to the trend-setting *Captain America Comics*, and fabulous work at DC. Also featuring the first parody of Superman, *Daring Mystery* #6 ranks high on my list of "must-have" Timelys!

Mystic [illegible] #6 (Oct, 1941)

Sporting one of the Golden Age's most memorable costumes, Keen Marlowe, aka the mighty Destroyer, debuted in this issue. Although *Mystic Comics*, a poor seller, would last just four more issues, the Destroyer would go on to appear in a total of 42 stories... in eight titles! Created by Stan Lee, the Destroyer became, arguably, Timely's fourth- most popular Axis-pounder. The Angel (that moustachioed Marvel Mystery playboy) appeared in more stories, but was bumped from the All-Winners ranks by the Destroyer.

In addition to his 15-page origin, *Mystic Comics* #6 featured a second 15-page Destroyer yarn, in his customary milieu behind enemy lines in Nazi Germany. This scarce book features a Kirby/Schomburg cover, ta boot.

Human Torch #3 (#2, Winter, 1940)

The Torch's second number is (perhaps surprisingly) important for a number of reasons beyond just being an early issue. First, it technically contains Captain America's first appearance in an ad for *Cap* #1. Second, it deserves mention for its text battle between Human Torch and Sub-Mariner over whose artist is better, Burgos or Everett! But what's never mentioned about this issue is that it contains the first multi-title crossover continuity at Timely (perhaps in all of comics?) This concept is a Timely/Marvel trademark, and would prove to be a foundation of the Marvel Universe concept, which under the Marvel "revolution" and leadership during the 1960's and beyond.

The Human Torch story in #2 continues from *Marvel Mystery* #16. It rolls on, into the Sub-Mariner feature in *Torch* #2, then jumps back again to *Marvel Mystery*#17! The trilogy entails a long, hard-fought adventure, whereby Torch and Subby crush an Axis scheme to invade the U.S. via an undersea tunnel! This classic crossover captures the energy and excitement of the early, Funnies, Inc.-produced Timelys, and foreshadows a concept which would flourish a generation later.

Captain America #66 (May, 1949)

Bucky...shot! On this historic comic's graphic cover, a superhero is actually depicted grievously wounded by a bullet! To my knowledge, it is unique in this regard (if anyone out there knows of another such display, please let me know. The Comet was shot dead in *Pep* #17, but... it simply wasn't displayed so shockingly on the book's cover! Ughh! Shameful... And that dear, misunderstood Dr. Wertham tried to warn us...)

Cap #66 is an important focal point in the history of Cap, Timely, and comics in general. As crime and cheesecake invaded the newsstand (Golden Girl, who shot Bucky, would become Captain America's glamorous new partner,) it also increasingly crept into the editorial strategy at Timely. Pull out that *Photo-Journal*, and look over the last ten or fifteen *Captain America* covers... the change truly is fascinating!

A fine-condition copy of *Cap* #66 still books for less than a Near Mint *X-Men* 94 (who says Golden Age is expensive?) I suggest grabbing a 66 while you can!

And that's a wrap on my ten picks of lesser-known Timely treasures, and my personal "tribute" to this wonderful company's most current marketplace tour de force. Let me know what Timelys you think deserve to make the list of second-tier keys. And for more historical information, check out George Olshevsky's comprehensive article on Timely in the *Overstreet Price Guide*, Tenth Edition and The Atlas article in the 22nd edition. Oh...one more thing. If anyone should happen to have a *Cap* #74 laying around... call me! ■

UNSEEN GOLD

GERBER'S FORSAKEN FLASH #56... the Action #1 of the missing covers!

The next time you talk to a fellow Golden Age collector ask if they know of any covers missing from Gerber's Photo-Journal. If they have an answer, more than likely it will be Flash Comics #56. If any cover has been made famous by its conspicuous absence it's Gerber's "forsaken Flash".

by Matt Nelson

Why? Simply put, *Flash* #56 is the only Golden Age mainstream superhero DC/Timely comic book missing from the *Photo-Journal*!

Sure, there are other Golden Age covers missing, other superhero covers missing, and even other DC and Timely covers missing. But, because of these factor combinations, *Flash* #56 has the dubious distinction of being the most well-known of all of the missing *Photo-Journal* comics. It is the *Action* #1 of the missing covers!

And with good reason. After eight years of searching Gerber could not locate a single copy of *Flash* #56 to photograph. When's the last time you couldn't locate a mid 1940's DC superhero comic book, even after eight years? That's what makes Ernie Gerber's forsaken Flash so famous! Now, *Flash Comics* is one of the scarcer DC titles, I'll grant you that. But eight years to find a *Flash* #56? Come on! Yet, there it is, missing.

How truly scarce is *Flash Comics* #56? You can find an excellent objective opinion in Pat Kochanek's DC scarcity article on *Flash Comics* in *CBM* #12. In the article Kochanek recorded sales of *Flash* #1-104 from various publications and conventions for a period of six years. In the middle of that six year period Gerber's Photo-Journals were published. Prior to that event Kochanek had recorded only four sales of *Flash* #56 and ranked it in the scarcest 25% of the run. The hype generated because the cover of #56 is missing from the *Photo-Journal* brought out four more copies and they immediately became available. Over the remaining couple of years Dr. Pat Kochanek recorded only one more sale of *Flash* #56.

Despite this intriguing example of the uncertainty principle (the book's scarcity "produced" more copies of *Flash* #56) it still remains a fairly elusive book and is nearly impossible to obtain in decent grade. Gerber ranks *Flash* #56 with a scarcity rating of 8 (11-20 copies exist), but, if you diligently search and have quick reflexes, you can probably locate a low-grade copy within months. Part of this may be due to the market's shifting to more of an investor orientation, and the diminishing likelihood of newer collectors trying to build complete runs of *Flash* #1-#104.

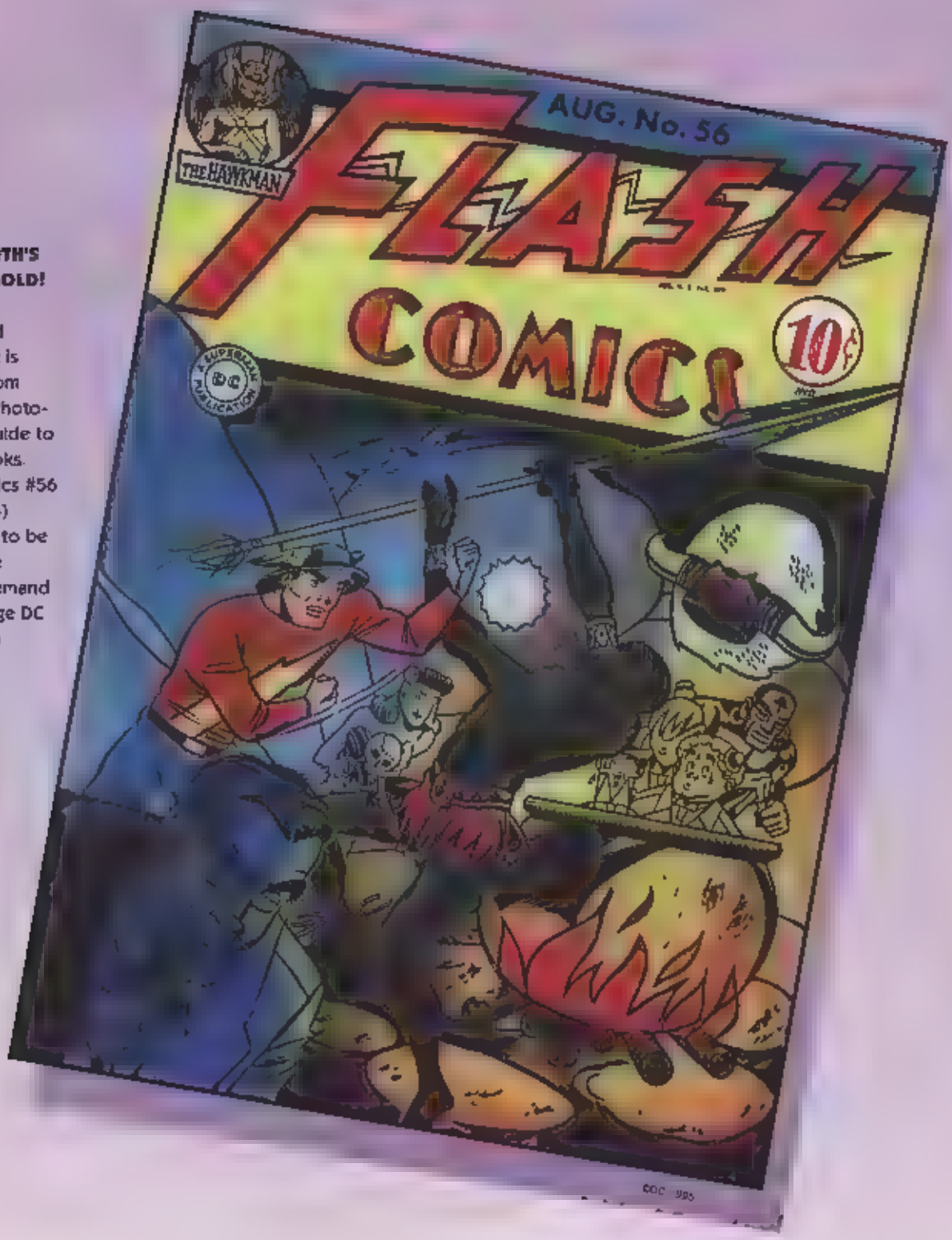
Once again, if you own a copy of *Flash* #56 I would like to hear from you. I'm taking a running tally of existing copies of the books missing from the *Photo-Journal* and plan on publishing the results in a future issue of *CBM*.

The cover of #56 features the Flash saving The Three Dimwits (recurring comedy relief characters) from cannibals and is drawn in the cartoon style of Martin Nodel. Even though the cover is attractive, *Flash* #56 will always be known and collected as the one that's "not in the *Photo-Journal*." Happy Hunting! ■

COLOR GALLERY

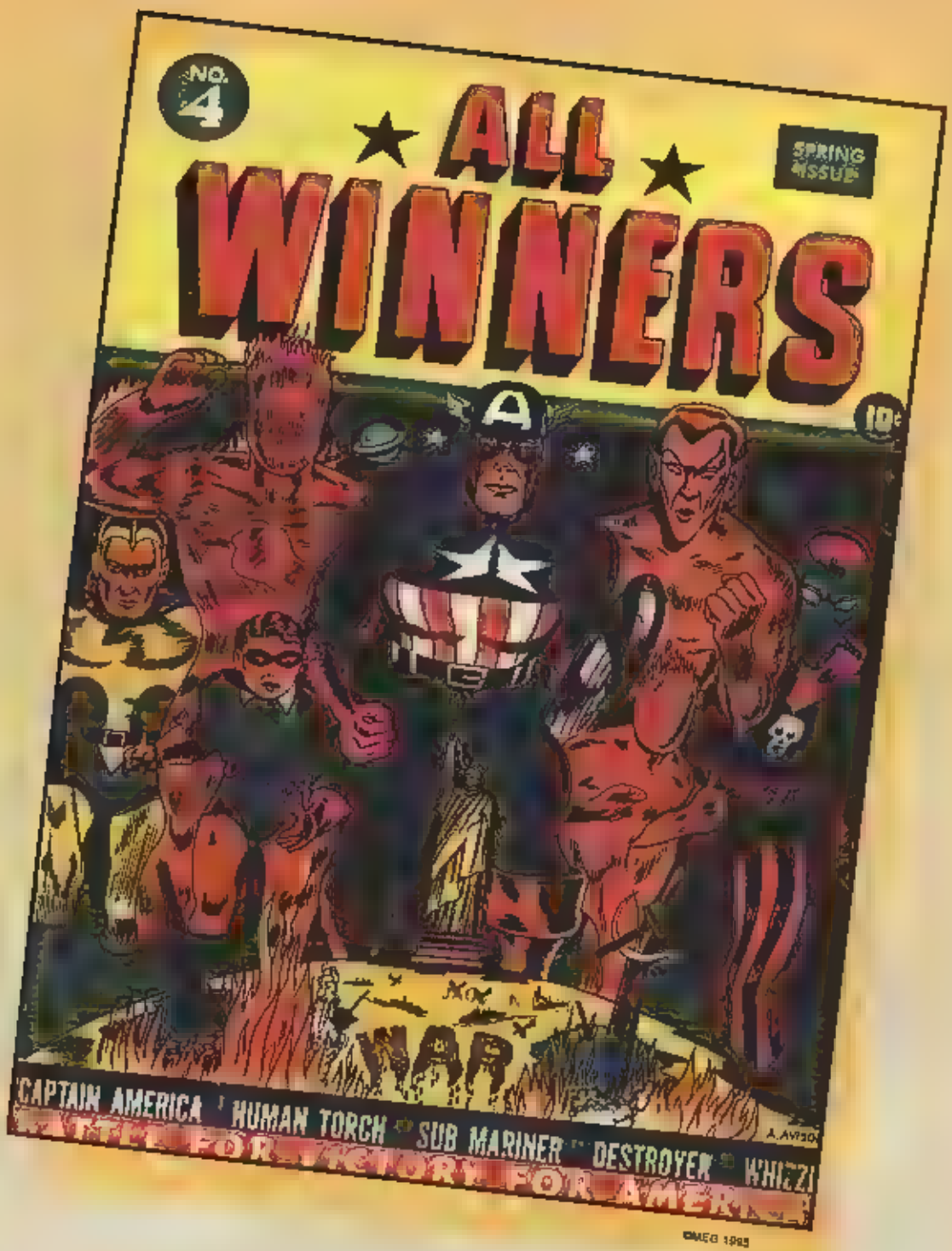
THIS MONTH'S UNSEEN GOLD!

n demand because it is missing from Gerber's Photo-Journal Guide to Comic Books. Flash Comics #56 (Aug 1944) continues to be one of the highest demand Golden Age DC superhero books.



LEFT:
In Mystic Comics #6 (Oct 1941) the Destroyer debuts as one of Timely's top four Axis-Pounders. This scarce war-cover Timely features a cover by Jack Kirby AND Alex Schomburg!

(See" Ten More Timely Treasures" elsewhere in this issue.)



ABOVE- Al Avison's show stopping propaganda makes All-Winners #4 (Spring 1942) one of the greatest Timely World War II covers to ever hit the newsstands. Besides the All-Winners, this classic and highly collectible issue also features Captain America by Al Avison, Human Torch by Carl Burgos, and Sub-Mariner by Bill Everett.

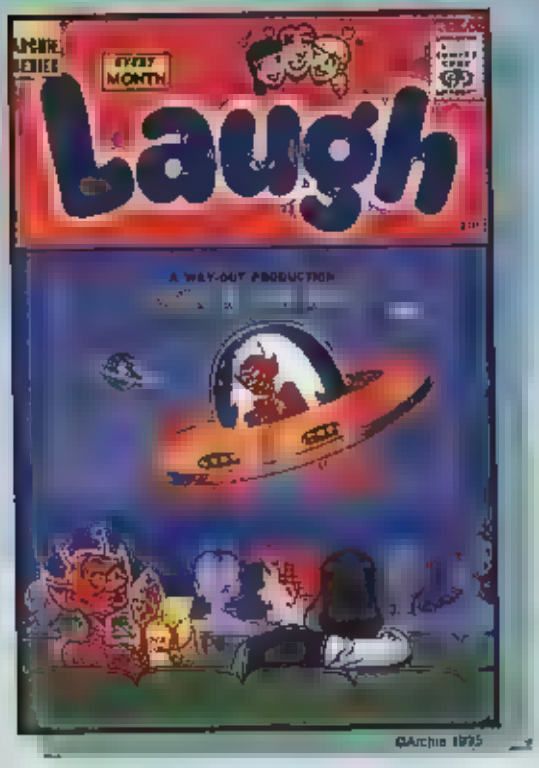
CBM COLOR GALLERY

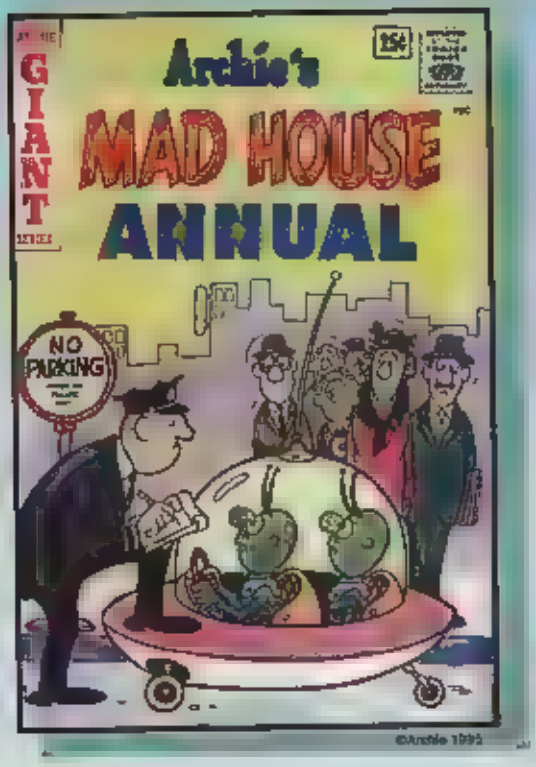
Four Flying Saucers buzz the covers of these Silver Age Archies

PEP #156
(Aug 1962)

[illegible] WITH ARCHIE #11
(Nov 1961)

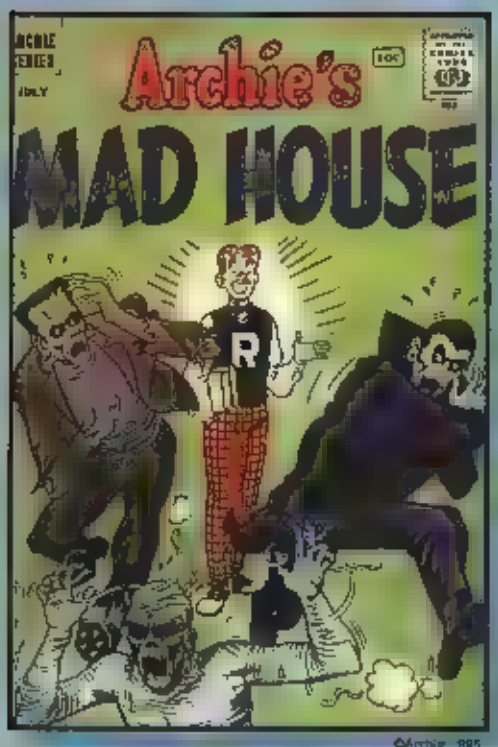
(See "Oddball Archie" elsewhere in this issue.)





LAUGH #128
(Nov 1961)

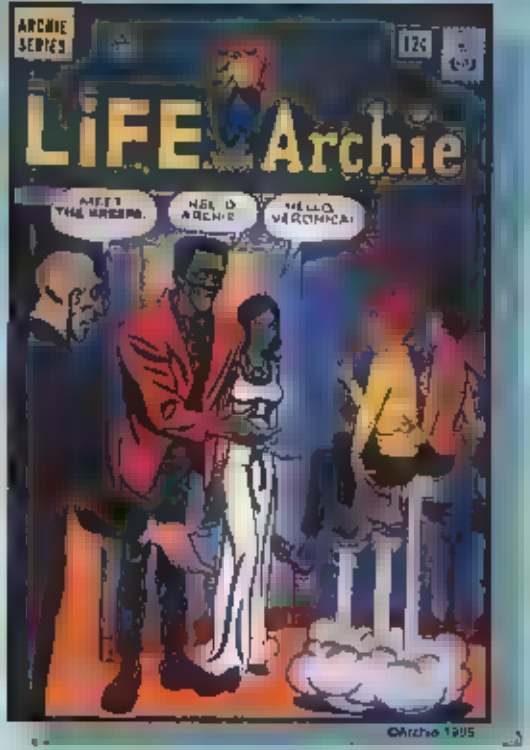
ARCHIE'S MAD HOUSE ANNUAL #1
(1962/1963)



As the Universal Monsters of the 1940s were introduced to a whole new generation of baby-boomers, Archie Comics jumped on the band with these classic covers

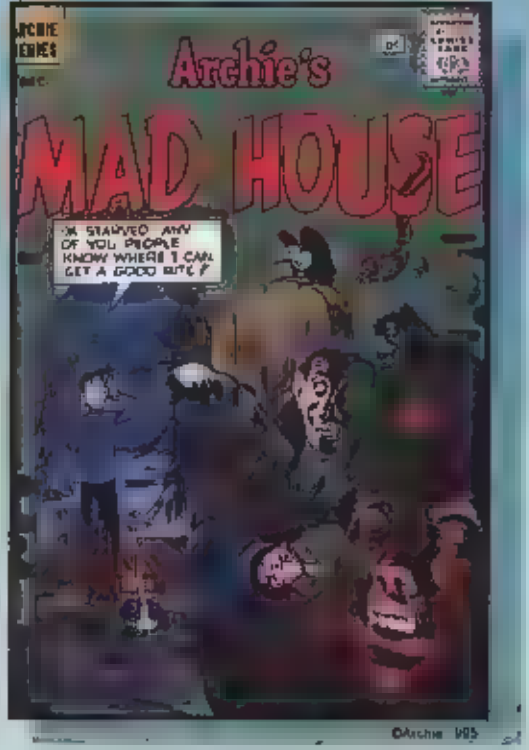
ARCHIE'S MAD HOUSE #13
(Jul 1961)

ARCHIE'S PAL JUGHEAD #78
(Date unknown)



[redacted] #39
(Date unknown)

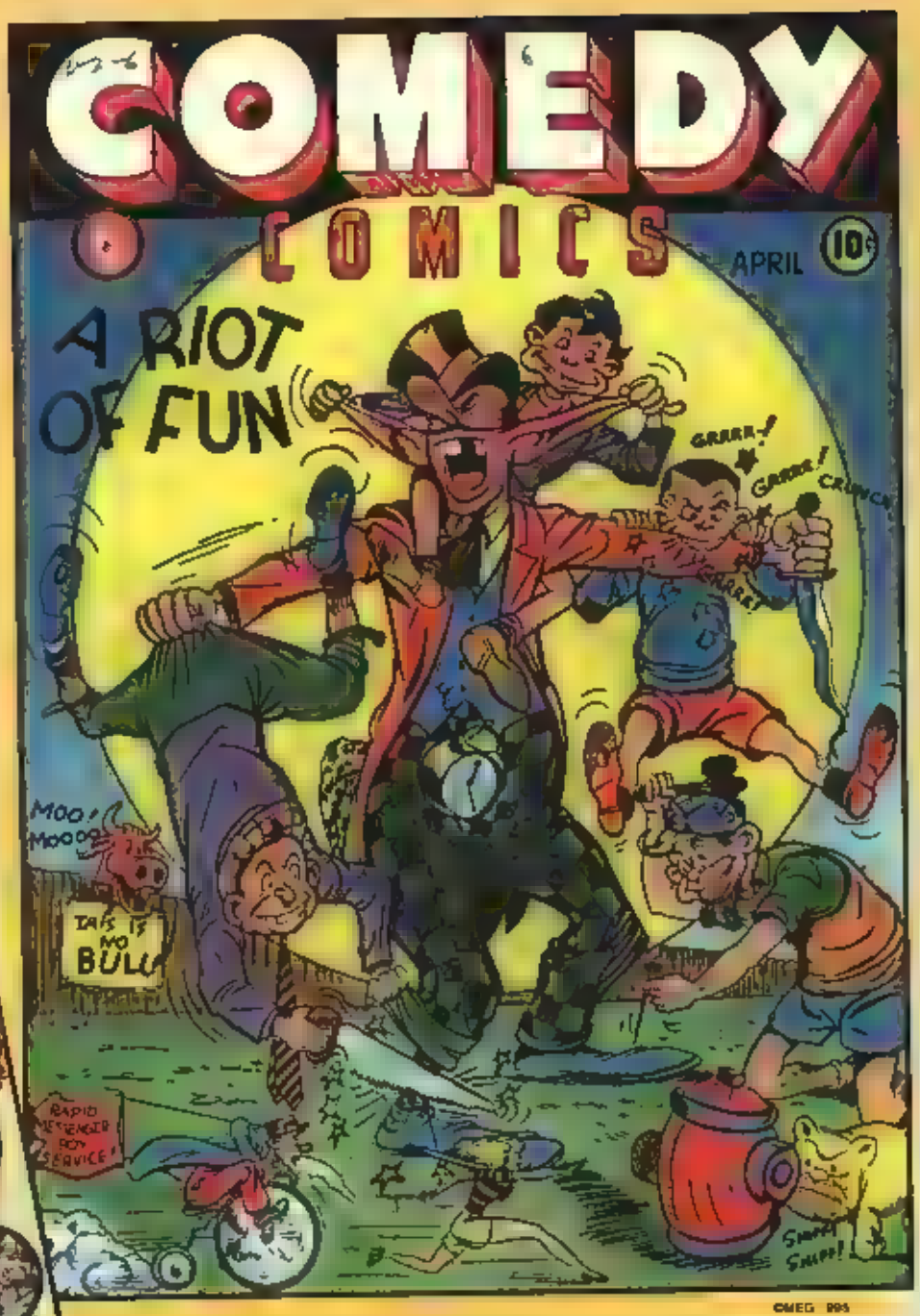
ARCHIE'S MAD [redacted]
(Dec 1961)

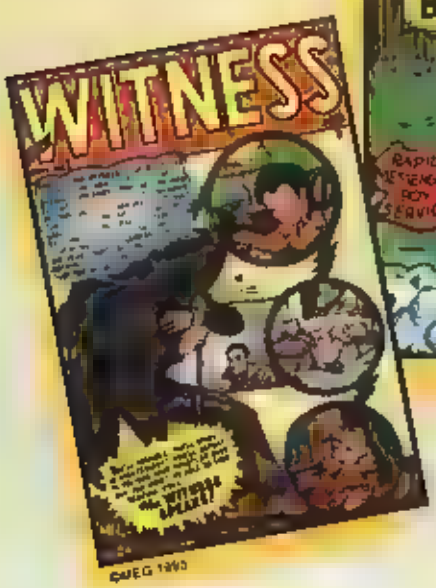


RIGHT- Esoteric and scarce Timelys. . Comedy Comics #9 (Apr 1942) is a continuation of the Daring Mystery title. It contains rare appearances of 3rd tier Timely costumed heroes including The Fin by Bill Everett. Pictured is the Mike High copy, courtesy the Jon Berk collection.

BELOW- A rare high grade copy of the Timely one-shot The Witness #1 (Sep 1948). It is considered by some to be a transitional "missing link" between Timely/Marvel and Atlas.

(See "Fandom Flashbacks" page 89)





THE MAD PLANET
MY FLAME GUN CAN'T DENT THAT ELECTRONIC BUBBLE! WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET OUR SHIP OFF THIS CRAZY WORLD!
HARRY! LOOK OUT!
ASTRONOMERS CONCEDE THAT THERE MAY BE OTHER INHABITABLE PLANETS AMONG THE 100 BILLION PLUS STARS IN OUR GALAXY! BUT THE CHANCES MUST BE INFINITELY SMALL OF FINDING A PLANET SO MUCH LIKE EARTH THAT EVEN ANOTHER NEW YORK CITY EXISTS THERE!
IT'D BE TOO MUCH TO EXPECT AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF THAT METROPOLIS--YET THE DIFFERENCES ARE WHAT EXPOSED THE STARTLING SECRET OF ...
THE MAD PLANET
MYSTERY IN SPACE

Written by Sid Gerson and drawn by the "dean" of science-fiction artists, Virgil Finlay's "The Mad Planet" (see splash page above) was hidden away in the obscure Mystery In Space #19 for years (see cover at right). The only complete Finlay comic book story ever published, it was known to only a handfull of collectors during the early days of fandom.

Today, Mystery In Space #19 is on the want lists of many hobbyists... including artist collectors, sci-fi collectors, and pre-code DC collectors, among others.

(See "Mister Fantastic, Virgil Finlay "elsewhere in this issue)

[redacted]

An acclaimed work of cover art composition, Flash #125 (Dec 1961) continues to be a favorite of Silver Age DC collectors.

(See "Silver Memories of the Scarlet Speedster" elsewhere in this issue)

WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON
WONDER WOMAN'S FATHER

●●●●●●

Holding a Ph.D. from Harvard...
inventing the lie detector...
& defending comic books as
healthy for children...
Princess Diana's creator may be
one of the most forgotten
comic book pioneers in history!

BY JIM KORKIS

William Moulton Marston, under the pseudonym "Charles Moulton", created the character Wonder Woman. Even so, he may be one of the most forgotten comic book pioneers in the industry. While the creators of DC's other top superheroes lived long enough to be interviewed and to receive public recognition, Marston's death in 1947 preceded the birth of comic fandom and the early researchers interested in chronicling the thoughts and memories of comic book creators. Like Wonder Woman, the story of her creator is full of amazing facts.

Marston was born in Cliftondale, Massachusetts on May 9, 1893. By 1919 he was a member of the Massachusetts state bar, and by 1921 he had a psychology doctorate from Harvard University. Through the 1920s and 1930s he was extremely active lecturing at universities, working with government study groups, authoring several books on a variety of topics, and producing articles on the psychological aspects of life which were syndicated to newspapers and magazines.

Certainly one of his most memorable accomplishments was the development of the lie detector. Lesser known is the fact that in 1939 he worked on an advanced model of the polygraph which he called the "Love Detector." Supposedly, this device could tell whether a man (or a woman) loved his/her mate, whether they married for love or money, and whether the love, if any, was based on higher emotions or just plain lust.

In the 1930s Marston made headlines when he predicted, "The next one hundred years will see the beginning of an American matriarchy: a nation of Amazons in the psychological rather than physical sense. Women have twice the emotional development, the ability for love than man has. Today, realizing their love motive has no sustained force, nothing to feed on, women are diverting their energies into other channels. And as they develop as much ability for worldly success as they already have for love, they will clearly come to rule business and the nation."

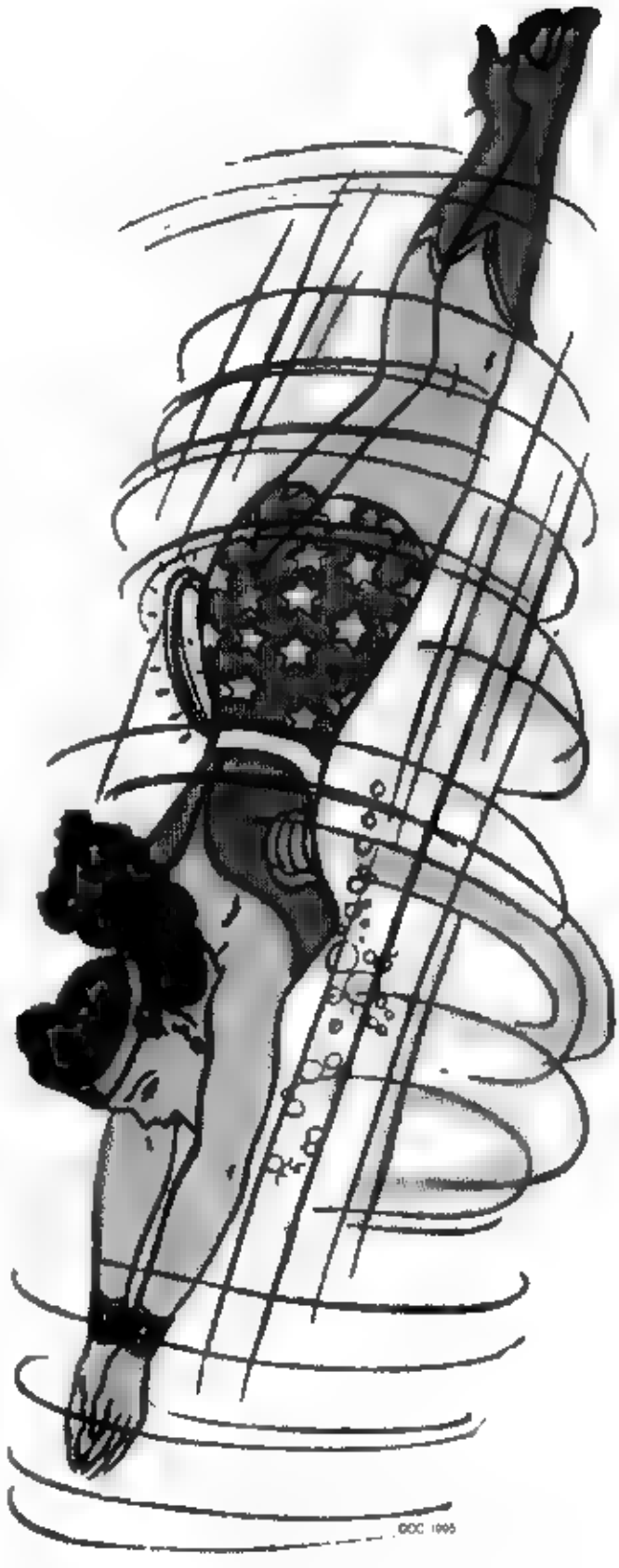
It was an article in the *Family Circle* magazine for October 25, 1940 that brought Marston to the attention of the comic book industry. "Don't Laugh at the Comics" by Olive Richard had the writer interviewing Dr. Marston, the resident *Family Circle* psychologist, about comic books. She was surprised to discover that the good doctor had been researching the topic for over a year, and that during that time he had

read almost every comic book published

There are 108 comics' magaz nes on the newsstands," claimed Marston in the interview. "Sales figures show that between 10,000,000 and 12,000,000 magazines are sold each month. That means $1,000,000 or more are spent every month by comics fans. There are, bes des another 3,000 000 or 4 000,000 comics magaz nes sold quarterly. Surveys show that, on the average, four children read every book sold. That makes a total of between 40,000 000 and 50 000,000 juven le readers per month. And another 12,000,000 to ,6,000,000 readers every three months. The magazines sell for ten cents a piece, which brings the yearly retail sales to between $.4,000,000 and $15,000,000

Marston was not only amazed by the new superhero comics, but generally felt they were beneficial for children. Concerning the character of Superman, Marston had obviously given the subject much consideration, for he went on at length about the Man of Steel. For the better part of two decades, about 200 story strips marched steadily along in the Sunday and daily newspapers: then- presto!- Superman' appeared. Comics evolution took another huge jump ahead. Superman- the supernatural, the stupendous, the great and ultimate embodiment of all childhood dreams of strength and power! Until the advent of Superman nearly all story-strip characters had retained some human characteristics and l mitations. Their adventures were real .n the sense that they exposed themselves to danger as ordinary humans do and suffered various defeats, hard knocks, and painful injuries in the course of winning their inevitable victories. But Superman can t be hurt. His skin sheds bullets like raindrops, he can't be crushed, drowned, burned, poisoned, or otherwise injured. His strength is colossal; he leaps over skyscrapers, runs faster than a bullet, and pushes ocean liners ahead of him while swimming underwater.

The Superman continu ties have almost no story value at all: they are nearly 100% wish-fulfillment pictures. What they gratify are the strongest human desires in life: the wish for strength and power, and the wish to help other people. Jerry Siegel's comics idea was far more radical than he himself realized. He forgot plot, danger, menace, and all suspense; he omitted all human qualities in his hero with which readers are supposed to identify themselves. His story is no story at all but simply



Oddball Archie Part I

By Scott Shaw!

In response to what was then a somewhat recently acknowledged segment of our nation's population cartoonist Bob Montana and publisher John Goldwater created Archie Andrews, America's Favorite Teen-Ager. He first appeared in *Pep Comics* #22 dated December 1941 and received his own title late in the winter of 1942. Riverdale's red-haired, befreckled teen (what's with those tic-tac-toe lines on his temples?) and his friends have remained popular for over fifty years and many generations.

Consider this: Archie has successfully survived World War II, the Korean War, the advent of rock'n'roll, the Cold War era, a presidential assassination, the British Invasion, the Summer of Love, the war in Viet Nam, student protests, drugs, gang violence, Watergate, disco, punk, new wave, hip-hop, and grunge, all the while managing to appear vitally contemporary with America's teens and pre-teen comic book readers. Not small accomplishments.

How has Archie (and his publishers) managed this rather amazing feat? It hasn't been easy, but by constantly reinventing the Eternal Teen, reflecting whatever current fad or attitude is in vogue with America's adolescent population while scrupulously skirting whatever elements of controversy or rebellion that might be too distasteful, yet retaining his acceptably mainstream personality, at any school and social situations, it has successfully done the trick.

But even with their usually discerning instincts, the good folks at Archie have occasionally stumbled or at least dressed ill-fitting variations and permutations to the Archie canon that have not only failed the test of time (as all fad driven concepts must) but rather seem memorably weird!"

I admit when I was a kid I was never much of an Archie fan. I preferred more imaginative fare than the high-school high-jinks likely to be found in most issues of *Archie's Pals 'n' Gals*. But whenever certain sales-inducing editorial decisions were made I took notice in the desired fashion. I eagerly plunked down my dime (or 12 cents, or whatever) for the funnybook in question. (In retrospect, it's now clear to me that my taste has always been more than a little odd.) *Little Archie* was one of the first comic titles I intentionally collected (rather than amassed). That was mainly for writer/artist Bob Bolling ("the Carl Barks of Archie") Bolling's frequent use of exotic animals, dinosaurs, aliens, and Mad Doctor Doom in his beautifully-told stories. (Years later, I was privileged to get the assignment to ink Bob's "final" Little Archie story.) There was also the wonderfully weird *Cosmo The Merry Martian* (more on this unique title in a future "Oddball Comics" column, I promise!) And *Tales Calculated To Drive You BATS* remains one of my favorite comic book series of all time. Over the years, many other examples of this sort of editorial re-direction at Archie Publishing has caught my attention. Here and in the next issue of *CBM* are some of the results of my observations.

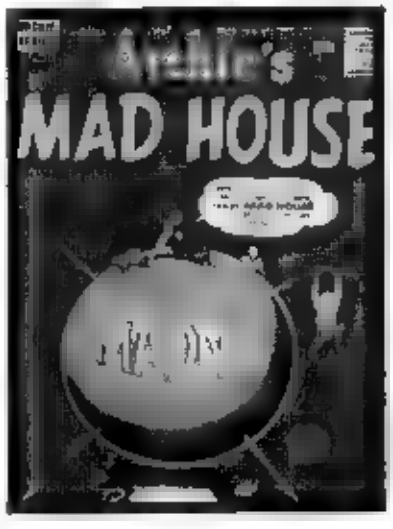
To the uninitiated, the world of Archie typifies a middle-class normalcy unseen aside from Leave It To Beaver reruns. But, as you'll soon see, something weird was *always* happening in Riverdale, or at least it certainly *seems* that way in retrospect. Let's take a look at some of these Oddball Archie items.

MONSTERS AND SCI-FI

During the mid-to-late 1950's, America found itself in the grip of a monster and science-fiction mania. (This fascination was dually triggered by the release-to-television of the classic Universal monster movies in the syndicated Shock Theater package, combined with a spate of best selling books about UFO sightings and alien contacts.) With such teen-oriented movies as Teenagers From Outer Space, The Blob, I Was A Teenage Werewolf, and Invasion of the Saucer Men in ascendancy, could teenage monster *comics* be far behind? His publishers weren't quite ready to turn Archie and his gang into the Addams Family (they'd wait to create Sabrina the Teen-age Witch until her debut in *Archie's Madhouse* #22, 1962) but they were willing to add a monster or two to the formula, especially on many of their eye-catching (and therefore sales-increasing) covers of the late '50's and early '60's. Just take a look at the covers of *Pep* #156, *Life With Archie* #11 and 39 (featuring Herman and His Munster look-alikes) *Josie* #15; *Jughead* #[illegible]8 and 8; *Laugh* #128; *Betty and Veronica* #70; and *Archie's Mad House* #'s 11, 13, and 16, among others. These far-out covers were the precursors of many Oddball themes to come to the pages of Archie Comics.

SPIES AND VIOLENCE

Ian Fleming's superspy character James Bond was introduced in the 1953 novel Casino Royale, but the spy fad didn't catch on until the premiere of the third Bond film "Goldfinger" in 1964. Bond was soon joined by TV's "Man From U.N.C.L.E." (1964) and a host of other secret agents and their acronym-bearing secret organizations. It didn't take the Archie editors long to figure out a way to jump onto the espionage bandwagon. (After all, as an editorial change of pace from the typical high school and dating stories, Archie and his friends would occasionally get involved in a *real* adventure, usually in the pages of *Life With Archie*. These exploits included such unlikely elements as dinosaurs, aliens, jungle safaris, undersea treasure hunts and, coincidentally, international espionage. The Archie gang even visited the New York World's Fair in *Life With Archie* #31.)



At first, references to James Bond movies began showing up as gag fodder on such comic covers as *Archie* #159 and *Pep* #194. This soon escalated into a more specific use of the espionage motif, as evidenced by their tongue-in-cheek series-within-a-series, starring Archie Andrews as "The Man From R.I.V.E.R.D.A.L.E." In this spy spoof series, A.R.C.H.I.E. and his friends, now all fellow agents (Betty Cooper was now "B.E.T.T.Y. The Girl From R.I.V.E.R.D.A.L.E.," etc.,) work for the secret organization known only as P.O.P., using high-tech Bondian weapons to fight the super-minions of the evil group C.R.U.S.H. (not to be confused with U.N.C.L.E.'s counter-organization

T.H.R.U.S.H.) Sorry, but to my knowledge, none of these acronyms were ever actually spelled out. By the counter-cultural late 1960's, authority figures such as government-sanctioned spies were no longer considered cool, and so Archie's agents of P.O.P. quietly faded from the scene.

LIFE WITH [illegible]

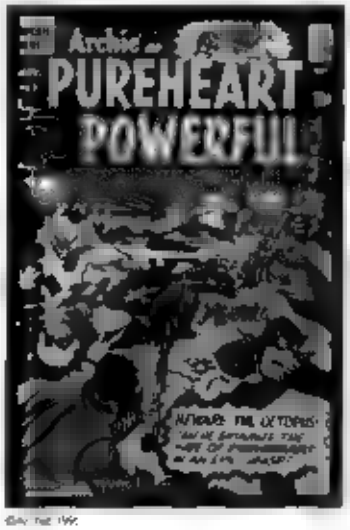
PUREHEART THE POWERFUL #1

THE ARCHIES

In 1966, "The Monkees," a TV series about a zany Beatles-esque rock band debuted on NBC and quickly became a huge hit with American youth. Notorious music publishing czar Don Kirshner, who initially created the Pre-Fab Four, was soon fired from his powerful position when it became widely known that, thanks to his "guidance," the Monkees performed, for the most part, only vocals on their first two albums. (The Monkees, composed of two actors and two musicians, turned out to be more talented that anyone was willing to admit.) They went on to record some fairly impressive self written-and-performed work until two events hastened the group's demise. The first event was the release of the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album, which raised the standards for all music. The second event was the mounting negative publicity concerning the Monkees' actual musical ability. (The Monkees' obscure and little seen movie "Head" is a satire of this public misunderstanding of their talent.)

But Don Kirshner was not to be denied; if human musicians wouldn't cooperate, then he'd create a band consisting of *cartoon characters!* Working with music talent that had "ghosted" some of the Monkees' material, Kirshner produced the monumentally irritating Top 40 "bubblegum" hit song "Sugar, Sugar," (1968) performed, thanks to some cleverly orchestrated licensing deal making, by a musical group called, of all things, "The Archies."

This not-so-coincidentally dovetailed with the Archie comic book titles, which had already begun to feature the exploits of Archie Andrew's band, modestly named "The Archies." In some of these stories, elements from "The Man From R.I.V.E.R.D.A.L.E." also turn up, with members of The Archies also acting as secret agents for P.O.P. (Check out the cover of *Life With Archie* #62, where the band members physically assault three men, apparently for the crime of merely wearing black masks!) Visually, the four-color group was directly imitative of The Monkees, right down to their red double-breasted shirts. (The hellish "Sugar, Sugar" was reportedly originally offered to the Monkees in 1967, but they refused the song, preferring to record their own, admittedly more legitimate material.) This carefully planned creation (of what was essentially a non-existent but highly popular) rock band eventually led to CBS' premiere of "The Archie Show" on September 14, 1968. Animated by Filmation Productions, the show comprised two 10-minute segments and a dance-of-the-week selection as performed by the Archies. The cartoon show was so successful that it spawned a host of imitators, including another rock group from Archie Publications, "Josie and the Pussycats" (1970) and "Josie and the Pussycats in Outer Space" (1972), this time animated by Hanna-Barbera (who was also producing at the time the Archie-inspired teenage "Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm" show (1971). In fact, the basic concept of The Archies was so popular that the print version of the "band" still turns up in the Archie titles every so often!



PUREHEART THE [illegible] AND OTHER [illegible]

Archie's editors realized that most *Archie* readers were also likely to be readers of superhero comics. (In fact, for a while, superheroes appeared under the same covers as Archie and friends in *Laugh Comics* from issues #127-144, including the Fly, Flygirl and the Jaguar.) Therefore, superheroes occasionally made their way into Riverdale, if usually only for the sake of an eye-catching cover gag. Sometimes the heroes depicted were on loan from the MLJ stable of characters such as The

Shield and Steel Sterling, among others, see *Jughead* #132 and 134 and *Josie* #22 for examples. Most times, however, a new character was created, usually in service to the gag at hand, as on *Archie's Mad House* #50, *Pep* #195 and *Jughead* #138. ("Captain Sprocket", a parody of a typical big-jawed superhero, even had his own long-running series in *Archie's Mad House*, starting in issue #25 (April, 1963.)

Then the TV show "Batman" premiered on the ABC network on January 12, 1966. The nation found itself in the grip of Bat-fever and all things superheroic. "Batman" broadcast in prime-time twice a week, had the best of both worlds, entertainment-wise: little kids could accept the show as rousing adventure, while older audiences picked up on the patently ridiculous execution of dialog and situations.

Meanwhile, Archie's editors had already taken advantage of this approach and having already given their characters a startling new spy-skew with "The Man From R.I.V.E.R.D.A.L.E." came up with their own "camp superhero creation. Archie Andrews was retooled with his own caped secret identity as Pureheart the Powerful first appearing in *Life With Archie* #42 (1965). Reggie became Pureheart's arch-foe "Evilheart" while Jughead was "Captain Hero" and Betty moonlighted as Superteen." Occasionally the trio of good guys teamed up to become "The United Three", this team-up first officially happened in *Life With Archie* #50. This superheroic version of the Archie cast occasionally popped up in nearly all of the Archie titles at the time, including Superteen" in *Betty and Me* #s 3-7 (1966-1967), Archie's Super-Hero Special" in *Archie Giant Series Mag.* #142 and even "Little Pureheart the Powerful," along with Little Evilheart" (actually Little Reggie) made their debut in *The Adventures of Little Archie* #40 (Fall, 1966.) Strangely enough, these campy tales of superheroics appeared side-by-side with stories still depicting Archie and company as typical American teen-agers without the slightest trace of secret identities! The two preeminent male heroes of Riverdale also received their own short-lived titles: *Archie As Pureheart the Powerful* (6 issues, 1966-1967) and *Jughead As Captain Hero* (7 issues, 1966-1967.) Eventually, as the super hero gimmick quickly began to tarnish, all references to the cast's super identities were quietly dropped. But in a 1994 surprise Archie Publishing resurrected the United Three in a special one-shot issue illustrated by superhero mainstay Joe Staton. No place more exemplifies the adage Everything old is new again" more than in comic books!

RELEVANCY HITS RIVERDALE

The late 1960's were turbulent times, and the youth of the day were understandably concerned with such controversial issues as politics, the Viet Nam war, pollution, drugs, the sexual revolution, race relations, feminism, and religion (both organized and otherwise.) Like their superheroic counterparts (such as DC's "all-new, all-now" *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*) the Archie titles eventually found a way to tackle these issues without seriously compromising the perimeters of editorial policy (editorial neutrality?) and the vital-to-sales Comics Code Authority. Check out this excerpt from *Everything's Archie* #16, October, 1971, in a story titled "Summer Prayer For Peace" *"The story you are about to read is a story with a message for everyone! It is about the feelings and beliefs of many young men who are being drafted into the armed services of our country today but in this particular case it happens to be Archie and his buddies—*

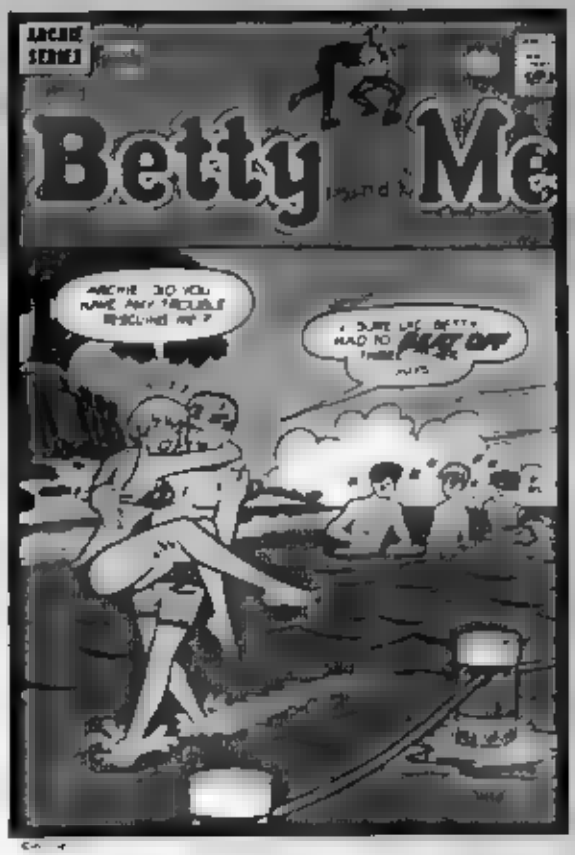
EVERYTHING'S ARCHIE#16
Archie gets drafted in an imaginary story

The story begins as Archie, Jughead, Reggie and other teens leave the Riverdale Army Induction Center they've been drafted! They're approached by "Clyde" (an eerie Kurt Cobain look-alike) who urges them, "Then get with it, cats! Protest! Refuse to go! *Burn your draft card!* Archie and his pals reject this notion, but flash the peace sign at Clyde as they leave to prepare for the big peace rally. At the concert, where The Archies are the headlining act, Archie himself makes a speech that Jack Webb might have been proud of *I'd like to thank all my brothers and sisters for coming to our peace rally and we would like to play a special song we have written for the occasion! It's called Summer Prayer For Peace, but before we start I'd like to tell it as it is! I'm speaking for the Archies, and it has to do with our country, the United States of America, the land of freedom! And with this freedom, we have the right to question and protest if we wish to! We have many growing problems in our country with protesting against education, bigotry, pollution and we are even engaged in a senseless war in which the Archies have been drafted to do our part! And we feel if everyone uses reasoning and works together, it will be resolved, because this is the dawning of a whole new*

Archie Covers That Are Just Too Bizarre For Words

BUT SCOTT GIVES IT A TRY ANYWAY!

BETTY AND ME #16 This is one of the wildest sexual innuendoes ever to appear on a non-underground comic! The emphasized lettering (in red, yet), gives me sincere doubts that Archie's dialog here was purely accidental, after all, it "passed muster" by a writer, a letterer, a colorist and an editor on this outrageous double entendre's journey into print!"



ARCHIE GIANT SERIES MAGAZINE PRESENTS #9 featuring "The World of Jughead." "So now we know what Galactus looks like under that helmet of his!"

ARCHIE GIANT [illegible] LIFE WITH ARCHIE #13 ("Geeko") "What is Geeko? Who is Geeko? Damned if know but bet this cover sold a lot of copies!"

ARCHIE #114 "What's going on here? I guess Archie's getting busted for his lewd behavior on the cover of Betty And Me #16!"

generation! We don't think violence or prejudice of any kind is right but we do know one thing that is very important to all of us! This is our country and it's the greatest! It's the only one of its kind in the whole world, so let's not destroy it!

Then The Archies sang their song of peace as a caption advises us:

Readers - remember this! The Archies are still a year away from being drafted but this is the way it would have happened. This is not really the end, but a means to an end! The End

Huh? What the heck is the point? Maybe not really making a point yet sounding like you were making a point was the politically correct approach.

Finally, in a notice at the bottom of the page, we are reminded: "DON'T FORGET TO GO TO YOUR LOCAL RECORD STORE TO LOOK FOR ARCHIE ALBUMS!"

So much for setting one's priorities straight. As far as I know, Archie's draft status was never again mentioned. For that, I guess we can all be grateful!

Other "relevant" issues included pollution, as seen in *Life With Archie* #115 and *Archie At Riverdale High* #41 (where one of Mr. Lodge's polluting factories gets picketed!), outlaw motorcycle gangs (*Life With Archie* #128) and religious cults, as on *Archie's Joke Book* #126 (featuring what looks to be the Maharishi.) Eventually, the Disco Era was upon us, and everyone, including the Archie gang, was too busy boogie-oogie-oogie-ing to worry about any "real-life" concerns. ■

SCOTT SHAW! is the author/compiler of "Oddball Comics" a boxed set of 36 collector's cards of "the craziest comic books ever published" published by Kitchen Sink Press. When he's not writing or drawing animated cartoons (The Flintstones for Pebbles Cereal, or comic books, (Tex Avery Comics, Radioactive Man) he's watching or reading 'em.

COMING IN THE NEXT CBM, ODDBALL ARCHIE PART II!

Archie gets religion, Sabrina hosts wholesome horror, and Mr. Weatherbee becomes a super hero! Plus, *Little Archie Archie's Mechanics, Jughead's Fantasy* and even more of the weirdest Archie covers ever seen!

So long Don...
& thanks for all the great stories.

Don Heck died of lung cancer on February 24, 1995. His illness struck suddenly... up until a few months ago he was continuing his career as a comic book artist. He started drawing comics in 1950, for a small publisher, Comic Media. His series of "portrait" covers for their magazine Horrific has earned a place in comics history as one of the great runs of "high-impact" cover art. The cover for Horrific #3 (January, 1953) of a "freshly-dead" man with a bullet hole in his forehead and #6's colorful "witch doctor" are the stars of the run- the #3 is particularly unforgettable.

Heck is perhaps best-remembered as one of the small stable of regulars during the "pre-hero Marvel" era, where every month, in titles like Strange Tales and Journey Into Mystery, he illustrated a five-page fantasy tale. His cover for Tales Of Suspense #1 (January, 1959) is a classic scene of interplanetary monster menace. When superheroes took over the Marvel titles, Heck drew the first Iron Man story (and the next 15 or 16 issues) and also did a lot of work on the Avengers.

From 1977 through 1988 Heck plied his trade at DC, drawing Supergirl, Wonder Woman, and the Justice League of America. After that he went back to Marvel, illustrating some of their "younger fan" titles (like Spidey).

I was lucky enough to interview Don by phone in early 1994, and it was wonderful talking comics with this talented artist, who was also an easy-going, up-front, and totally unpretentious individual. (That interview appeared in Overstreet Gold & Silver Quarterly #4) At that time (and this shows how awful cancer can be) his health seemed sound enough, and he was working and happy and willing to discuss his career with a stranger. It was the first time I got to talk at length with an artist whose work I'd admired since childhood.

Don Heck is dead at the age of 66, but his work is still here for us. And he'll live a little each time someone stares at the cover of Horrific #3 and each time someone fezis his style enhancing a pre-hero Marvel fantasy yarn. This is memorial enough and an inspiration for those who seek to make their way in the funnybook industry. Thanks, Don, for a job well ▬

— PAT S. CALHOUN, March 6, 1995

THE VAULT

At long last Diamond International Galleries opens their doors to reveal one of the largest collections of vintage comic books and collectibles ever amassed in a single location!

After months of antic pat[illegible] by collector and dealer alike, the grand opening of Diamond International Galleries finally took place on Friday, January 27, 1995 in Timonium, Maryland. The Coliseum of Collectibles" opened to the curious public with a gala party reminiscent of a Hollywood Premiere — right down to the limousines and the star-look-a-likes.

The invitation appropriately read, "When the vault opens" — the guest list handedly confirmed that the slogan sounded more like a bank opening than the opening of a collectibles and memorabilia gallery.

And it was clear right from the start that a goodly number of attendees came focussed on a specific area of investment — Golden Age. This was proven time after time as representatives of the Gallery made their way with customer in hand to the [illegible] room where sales were written up and credit cards and checks were in abundance.

The guest list read like the "Fortune 500 of comic collectors. Although black tie was optional, many chose to dress to the nines! Even though many of the guests seemed as if they were "born" in a tux, the gathering was clearly a new experience for others. A few long time comic collectors stated that this event was of such importance to them (and to fandom history) that they had donned fancy evening wear for the first time in their lives.

Comics were selling faster than a speeding bullet. The brisk sales were virtually non-stop from 7:00 PM when the gala began right through to closing.

When CBM asked Jim Snyder what he thought of the event he said, "It was an absolutely wonderful time and a real success. All the things we wanted to accomplish we did so — was beyond our most optimistic projections. We had a tremendous turn-out, a record sale of more than a million dollars and we educated a lot of people about the collectibles market. It was a great evening, and Steve Geppi finally got to fulfill his life long dream — bringing credibility and a little class to collectibles."

John Snyder continued, "Several surprises have taken me a little off-guard. The biggest was the immense demand for many of the more valuable books. We've also broken new ground in the market with comic book re-creation paintings and fine art. A lot of

OPENS!

An eyewitness account by Keif Fromm

these early artists have either passed away or retired and their work is getting more and more difficult to find. A new benchmark minimum of $1,500 has pretty much been set for these.

Another surprise was the level of demand for the superhero books — they did even better than predicted, and so did superhero related premiums. One amazing record was set with the sale of the Red Ryder Victory Patrol Kit (with comic book). A file copy from the Western Publishing House, sold easily for $6,000. Also a number of key Golden Age books went for multiples of *Guide*.

As the night came to a close, John Snyder inquired if I had received an invitation to the Diamond Brunch the next morning (Saturday). He indicated that all who attended the Friday night gala had an open invitation, and that I would likely see some fellow collectors and friends there. Little did I know.

The Saturday Feeding Frenzy

As my fellow hobbyists gathered for Brunch on the morning of January 28, 1995, I began hearing that (based on requests from numerous individuals) Steve Geppi had arranged for us to view (and possibly purchase) some of the newly acquired and legendary Overstreet comic book collection. Could it be possible? Would I be one of the serendipitous few to have this incredible opportunity?

Two and one half hours later the dream of a lifetime came true! After waiting for what seemed an eternity, the first mad-truck finally came into view. It contained approximately a dozen long boxes and contained high mid-to-high grade key and non-key comics. It was evident that those who were present were more than a little excited. Despite the implications of the event, most kept their composure. No one was allowed to approach the boxes until all were neatly aligned on the tables. Once situated and unloaded, the composure went out the window and what many have described as the Saturday Feeding Frenzy Of Timonium proceeded like a chain reaction.

This was a day not for the faint of heart. Even though "the feeding frenzy" continued without abatement for approximately four hours, participants reported that they were amazingly content with their prizes. None left empty-handed... and none left disappointed!

Even as I arrived home, I craved to go back. It took 24-hours to "come down" from my state of collecting bliss.

When Lyman Frank Baum wrote the Wizard of Oz nearly one hundred years ago, I'm sure he never thought that Oz could really exist. He was wrong... the Emerald City is in a tall silver building in Timonium, Maryland... and it's called Diamond International Galleries! ■

1 A fellow collector presents Steve Geppi and Mindy Moran with the grand opening champagne.
2 Robert Rogovin & Dan Greenhaigh check out "the goods" as Harry & Mandy Matetsky chat with Diamond International Gallery representatives.
3 Jim Vitale analyzes the artwork of Edgar Church with Chuck "Mile High" Rozanski.
4 Alan Bartholomew and Gary M. Carter discuss an upcoming CBM article.
5 Steve Geppi toasts the elegant Gallery library, the new home for his world renowned collection of bound volumes!

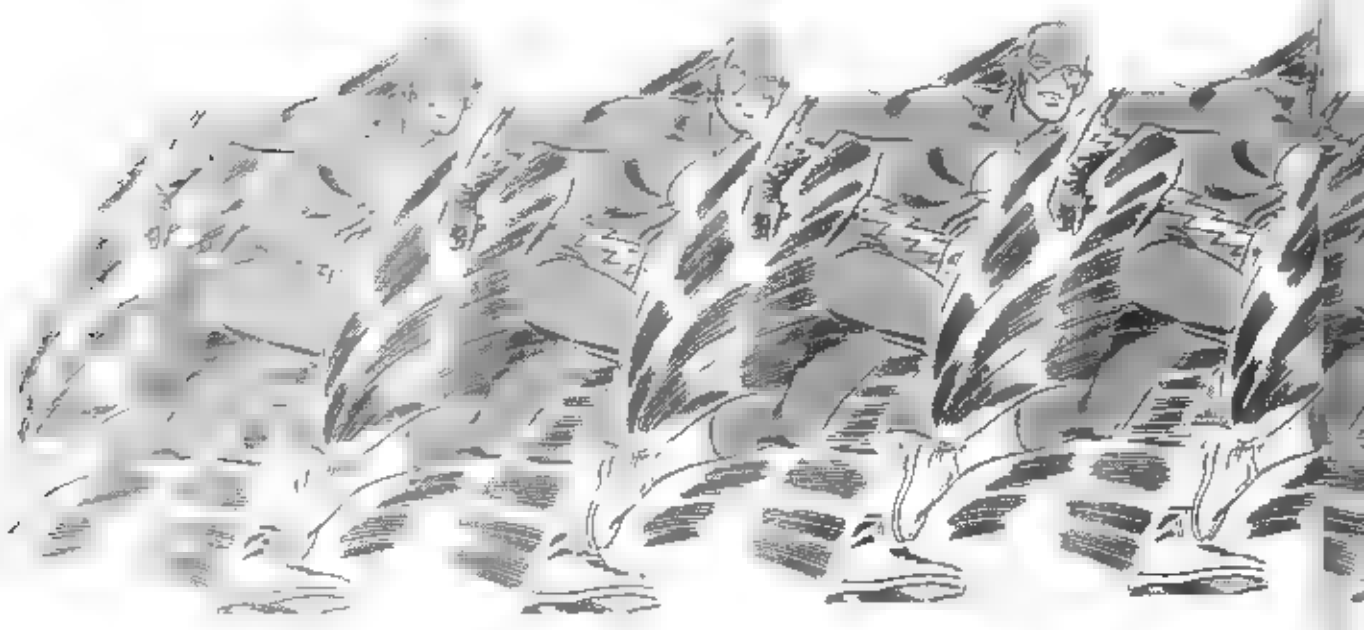
SILVER MEMORIES of the SCARLET SPEEDSTER

by Steven Gentner

Many collectors and fans (including myself) feel that Flash defined the very best of Silver Age comics. Before I was even aware of the Golden Age (where I spend most of my time now), Carmine Infantino's Flash was "it" for me.

That's because the Flash was a thinking-man super-hero. Skillfully written (primarily by Gardner Fox) the plots did not always rely on the characters super-powers to overcome danger or to capture villains. Instead, clear thinking, reason and resourcefulness were integral elements of victory.

Besides, Barry Allen was a likable guy. He and his costumed identity pulled me back each month to see what the



Flash was doing. As a kid I could identify with him, and I liked him. Flash never exploded into a berserk rage didn't have bad teeth and hair never felt sorry for himself or unable to cope with life. Flash was human enough but he was also ready, capable, and dependable. Unlike those heroes from that "other" company, I could depend on the Flash's emotional stability!

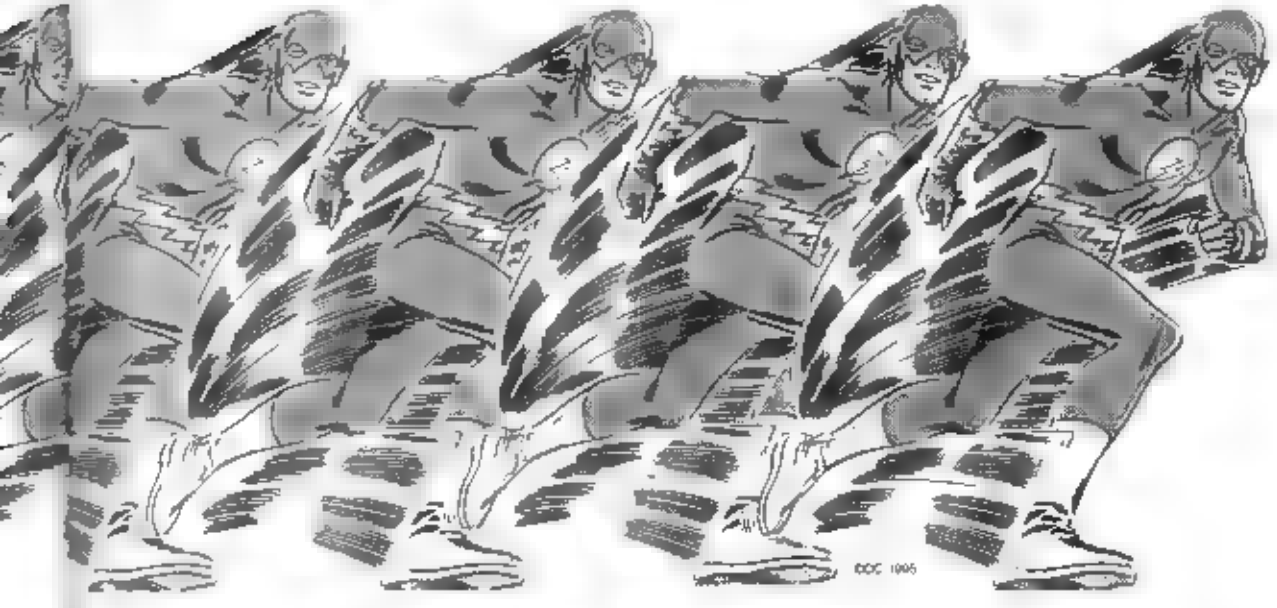
Carmine Infantino's starkly beautiful drawings perfectly suited Flash. To my eye, Infantino's ability to illustrate speed, spinning, vibration, and motion was unparalleled. His science-fiction framework from Gardner Fox's writing,

> Advanced sci fi concepts and terms were regularly served up in the early Flash stories... and primarily to 7-13 year olds who were still watching astronauts from the early space program and who wouldn't see a Star Trek episode for another three years!

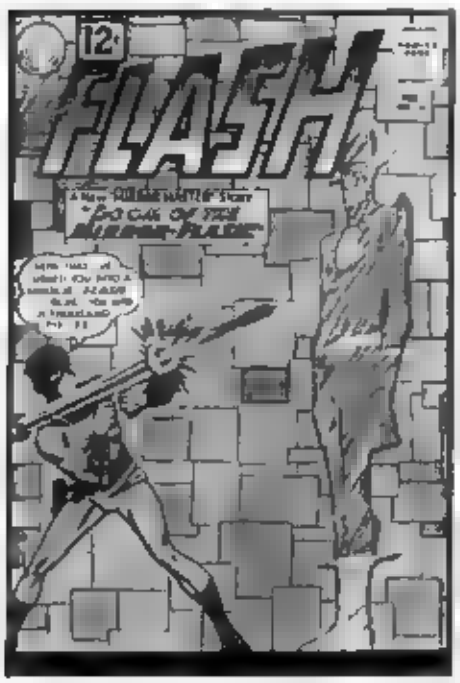
allowed Infantino to realize Gorilla City, the 25th Century, and other alien landscapes in gorgeous detail.

The backgrounds of Flash stories (especially those set in the future) were dominated by tall spires with impossible sweeping ramps angular and perfectly designed "hover-craft" style vehicles and an assortment of incredible weapons that look like sculptures from a modern art gallery. Even the facial expressions of hero and enemy alike are rendered with a confident and consistent elegance that almost transcends comic book art!

So when I recently had an opportunity to select some



books from a nice run of Flash I couldn't help being gripped by a tidal wave of nostalgia as I gazed upon the little jewels. There among the cache were my five all-time favorite Silver *Flash* issues... and in grade to boot! As I re-acquainted myself with each four color treasure, I remembered why these specific issues remain in the top five positions:



Above
FLASH #126
(Feb 1962)
"I'll blast you into a thousand pieces!"

Right
FLASH #139
(Sep 1963)
Professor Zoom and the cosmic treadmill help to
[illegible]
"Menace of the Reverse-Flash!"
[illegible]
Speedster classics.

Doom Of The Mirror Flash

The first issue of *Flash* I ever bought was #126 (February, 1962). It was Christmas time when it hit the stands, and even "toy lust" couldn't diminish the coolness of this comic. Mirror Master had escaped from jail into a mirror-world from which he couldn't return. The gorgeous inhabitants (who had never seen a mirror) brought him plunder as tribute before he could even steal it! Desperate to return, Mirror Master shot images of himself around Central City to lure the Scarlet Speedster to pursue him.

Traversing the dimensional barrier, Flash is beset upon by the doting ladies of Mirror Master. Vibrating back through the portal with MM, Flash is shot with a device which actually turns him into a mirror! Flash's control of his every molecule melts his glass form into goo, and back to human form again for the coup de gras. All through this marvelous story is Carmine Infantino's matchless artistic style depicting speed and super science.

Also in #126 is National Periodical's historic ins de-front-cover house ad apologizing" for raising the price of their comics from 10¢ to 12¢. If DC didn't really care about the price increase, you wouldn't know it from their letter. As a reader, I sympathized with their problem – I was able to subscribe through and still get the 10¢ price.)

Even the letter column in #126 is historic in its own way. The first missive is from reader and fan Don Thompson (late editor of the Comic Buyers Guide), his well written letter praising the now famous *Flash* #123 ("Flash of Two Worlds") – was so well received that the editors awarded him the original art for the cover of "Flash of Two Worlds"! What an incredible prize!

Captives Of The Cosmic Ray

The next Flash book to make the top five favorite *Flash* list is #131 (September, 1962). My drugstore didn't seem to carry *Green Lantern* as regularly as *Flash*, but, when I saw the two characters together in "Captives Of The Cosmic Ray", I was hooked. I had read, by this time, some of the Justice League issues ... although the covers promised teamwork and dazzle, I though you got confusion and fizzle! I've never particularly cared for the interior art of JLA... the panels seemed cramped and the characters blocky blob-like representations of my heroes (especially Superman, Flash, and Green Lantern). In contrast, Carmine Infantino ahh drew any character he wanted with an elegant grace and style. This made the teaming of GL with Flash a special treat.

The plot revolved around the Mymutons invading Earth from outer space. Flash thwarts their attempt to render GL powerless, and GL comes up with an attack plan to capture Mymuton central. The extended three part story, teamwork, and the excellent art (with red and green such a great color juxtaposition) made this a must have in my collection.

Menace Of The Reverse Flash

Third position in my favorite Silver *Flash* list is held by issue #139 (September, 1963) with its intriguing title Menace of the Reverse Flash. This new "classic" story introduced and told the origin of Professor Zoom... an admittedly lame" moniker sounding more like a breakfast cereal today, yet was somehow credible within the context of the 1960s Flash mythos.

Zoom steals Flash's uniform (sent from the past), discovers it contains residual "super speed wave patterns left over from the last time Flash used it", amplifies these wave patterns using a simple 25th Century technique", and gains the Flash's super speed when he dons the newly "revived uniform... but not before the good professor dyes the costume in "opposite" colors (red becomes yellow, and yellow becomes red?) and explains "I consider myself the reverse of Flash in every way."

Intoxicated with the power of his newly found super

speed, Zoom begins his dastardly plot to steal the most valuable thing in his future world — the sculptures of the alien "Cribs".

Meantime back at the ranch — er — rather back in the past — , the professor responsible for shooting the time capsule into the future realizes that the atomic clock he placed inside would turn into a nuclear bomb in the future. Flash hops on his trusty cosmic treadmill (what a great device!) introduced way back in *Flash* #107, and the battle is joined in the future.

Master Infantino now has two speedsters to put against each other! Yellow and scarlet "ribbons of velocity" dance from panel to panel . as Flash pursues the nefarious Professor Zoom. Pushing Zoom ahead of him, the natural friction-free aura keeps Flash "cool" as Zoom's emulsion breaks down and he is defeated by heat. All this, mind you, with the atomic clock/bomb ticking down, (oooooh)! A great story, but even better with the contrasting monarchs of motion!

Number four on my "Flash parade" was perhaps the first Flash back-issue I ever collected (I just missed it at the stands) — its magnificent cover speaking volumes to my eager eyes. *Flash* #125 showcased the epic "Conquerors of Time" and featured every kids sci-fi staple — invaders from space (again). This time the aliens devise a way to render atomic power/radiation useless and — in the far future. Earth weapons relying on these power sources become inert, and the invaders (the Dokris) enjoy an effortless take-over.

The fastest man alive" confronts the future menace while his co-star Kid Flash travels back to prehistoric times. By utilizing the just completed cosmic treadmill Kid Flash destroys the Dokris "hive" device. Flash frees himself from the Dokris clutches and Earth is safe once more. (Wouldn't we have been safer if atomic bombs didn't work? Oh well — those future Earthmen were relying on us!) However flawed, some of the plot elements may have been, the cover to this book remains a dynamic and beautifully rendered Silver Age classic — and is perhaps my favorite cover of the entire run.

Last on the top five roster, and my absolute favorite story — is the magnificent Silver key *Flash* #123 (dated September, 1961). Now familiar to nearly every present day Silver Age collector, "Flash of Two Worlds" is famous for both its brilliant cover concept and the fateful re-introduction of the Golden Age Flash (and his original alter ego, Jay Garrick) to a new Silver Age generation. I wonder if Don Thompson realized at the time just how accurately his now famous letter had this landmark issue pegged — just a few short months after writer Gardner Fox & editor Julie Schwartz sent their history making block-buster to the stands.

Some forget that before #123 came along most young readers had never heard of a "Golden Age" comic, much less seen one! I was somewhat the exception in that I had been told a little about "the old stuff". But like so many others I'd never actually "seen" (much less read) a book from that bygone era.

Golden Age comics and the heroes they contained remained a real mystery — until I made an amazing discovery that changed my perspective — and simultaneously teased my youthful curiosity. Hidden deep

FLASH #131 (Sep 1962) The classic team-up issue, complete with flying

FROM FLASH GRAMS IN ISSUE #126

Don Thompson critiques Flash of Two Worlds

Dear Editor — must confess I felt you were merely blowing your own horn by stating that "Flash Of Two Worlds" was sure to become a classic. I am now so convinced of this that I am buying a couple of extra issues-something I have not done before.

This is unusual for me because I have been of the opinion for some time that National Comics of today were pretty pallid and occasionally stupid compared to the issues of 10-20 years ago (although today's are definitely better drawn). This issue had a rare quality these days, and especially rare for National. The story contained no stupid looking (or worse cute-looking) monsters from outer space-and it contained a refreshing amount of sensible dialogue, and a shortage of impractical gimmicks.

A large part of my fondness for this story, frankly, is nostalgia, but nostalgia is one of those two-edged swords. I was receptive to the idea of reviving the old Flash, but would have been extremely critical of any ill-treatment of my old friend.

Best of all, you aged Jay Garrick, let him marry and had the uncommon good sense to realize that while his speed is still pretty much what it was, his endurance would not be. This touch of humanity made the story much better.

Donald Thompson
Room 36 3518 Prospect Ave
Cleveland 15, Ohio

We know Don Thompson as one of comicdom's toughest critics, and his rave letter has got us in such a fuzzy that we're awarding him the original "Flash Of Two World" cover-Editor.) ©DC 1995

FROM 10¢ TO 12¢... THE TRAUMATIC TRANSISION

A Letter From DC to You!

Dear Boys and Girls: First, we would like to thank you for having bought this DC magazine, even though it cost you two cents more than usual. Obviously, you like our magazine and consider our stories worth the extra two pennies. That make us feel mighty proud!

However, we think we owe you an explanation as to why it was necessary to raise our price, after successfully publishing comics for over 25 years at 10¢. Over these past years the cost of producing our magazines has steadily risen. We have to pay more for art, engraving, paper and printing. You, too, have to pay more for most of the things you buy. Sodas and telephone calls were a nickel, now they are double that, ten cents. Hot dogs also were a nickel, now they are at least a dime, 15¢ in most pieces. Everything costs more today than just a few years ago. Your parents have to pay more for food, clothing and rent.

The retailer who sold you this magazine has also been affected by rising costs, and so has the company that delivered the magazine to him. All of us will share the additional two cents. Although some of our competitors are now charging 15¢ for the same size comic magazine that we produce, we feel that 12¢ adequately covers our rising production costs, and is therefore a much better value for you.

We feel confident that you understand the necessity for this slight adjustment, and will remain loyal fans. For our part, we promise to redouble our efforts to maintain the same high standards of publishing that have produced the world-famous line of SUPERMAN-DC Comics.

Sincerely yours, The Editors

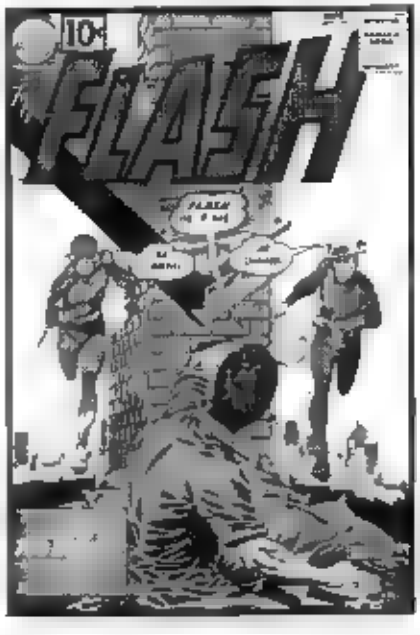
P.S. Our GIANT ANNUALS will still cost only 25¢! ©DC 1995

in the depths of my grandparent's cavernous basement was the cover of *World's Finest* #6! With no stories to read or pages to explore that "ancient" piece of colored cardboard piqued my curiosity and presented a whole plethora of new and intriguing questions!

Those questions remained mostly unanswered until Gardner Fox, Carmine Infantino, and Julius Schwartz came to the rescue with *Flash* #123. Not only did their wonderfully written adventure take me for the greatest comic book roller coaster ride I had ever experienced... but they even presented the Golden Age Flash and three Golden Age villains to challenge the wits of my favorite Silver Age character. Even though Flash's (Silver) ability to "span" into different dimensions was used rather often in previous story lines, "Two Worlds" demonstrated how effectively the well-used plot device could frame a story.

In "Flash of Two Worlds," Barry Allen as Flash accidentally traverses a dimensional barrier while performing at an orphan's charity. Two Barry's "pops" up in Keystone City, and, to his amazement, he realizes that his favorite comic book hero is actually living there!

After meeting his other-dimensional counterpart and his wife, the two speedsters reveal their secret identities to each other. Then Barry learns of Jay's intention to come out of retirement in order to confront a new crime wave. Barry eagerly offers his



Above- FLASH #125 (Dec 1961) Flash and Kid Flash co-star in the Silver Age classic "Conquerors of Time!"

Below- FLASH #123 (Sep 1961) "A spectacular story that is sure to become a classic!"

assistance, and the battle is joined.

Gardner Fox's skillful manipulation of characters and powers is truly a masterpiece of script writing. Skillfully edited by Julie Schwartz and triumphantly rendered by Carmine Infantino, I and thousands of other avid fans were in total comic book rapture as we savored every panel and word!

I just couldn't get enough! I wanted more! I read it, re-read it, and then re-read it again! To this very day, this milestone issue remains my absolute favorite Silver Age book (story and character) of all time!

I'm sure all of you remember the books you read growing up which meant the most to you. For me these five *Flash* comics really are "the Silver Age." The Flash will always have a special place in my heart as my favorite Silver Age hero. ■

CBM would like to know which comic issues are YOUR FAVORITE FIVE! Drop us a line and let us know! We just might publish your list in a future issue!

The "Vinyl" Comic Books

Welcome to the first installment of Duane's World, a regular feature of Comic Book Marketplace. During the next few months I'll be exploring the world of comic related collectibles - some are historically important, some are rare, and some are downright preposterous! But they are always interesting and often quite rare.

As you know, the world of collectibles offers one discovery after another. As we chronicle these discoveries and the questions they generate, I hope you'll contribute additional information that I can share in future columns.

Some of those future columns are already in the works and they'll be spotlighting odd, weird, and just plain fun examples of comic book art, toys, records, advertisements, newspapers, figures, games, pulps, cartoons, ...just about anything that is related to marketing comic books and comic book characters.

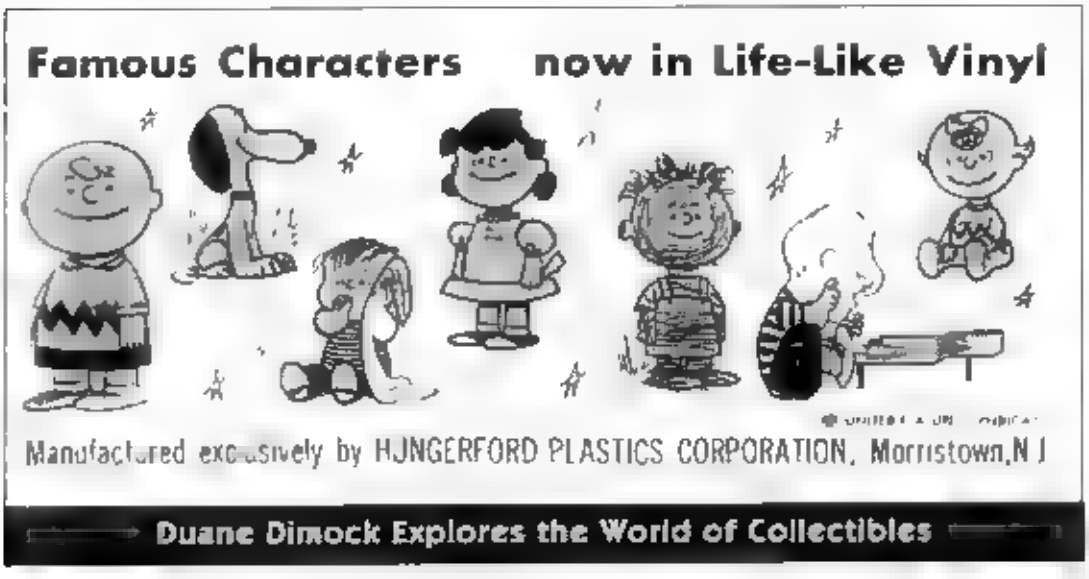
This month's discussion spotlights The Hungerford Plastics company. During the late 1950s' and early 1960s', Hungerford produced beautifully sculptured vinyl characters (called "vinyls" by hobbyists) that measure 6" to 8" tall. A list of the comic book characters in the "set" includes Peanuts gang members Charlie, Lucy, Linus, Sally, Pigpen, Snoopy, and Schroeder with piano, The Jay Ward family characters Bullwinkle Moose, Rocky The Flying Squirrel, Moonmen Gidney (with mustache) and Cloyd, Sherman, and Mr. Peabody; and of interest to Harvey fans... Casper The Friendly Ghost, Baby Huey, Little Audrey, Herman & Katnip.

ABOVE: Front Cover of Harvey 20-page "header card" mini-comic featuring Casper, Herman & Katnip, Little Audrey, and Baby Huey.

All the Hungerford toys came packaged in clear plastic bags with two-sided, cardboard header cards ... except the Harvey figures.

Collectors of strange, offbeat, odd-sized, and obscure comics take note! The header "card" for Harvey figures isn't a card at all ... it's a 16 page mini comic!

The color comic measures 3 inches tall and 6

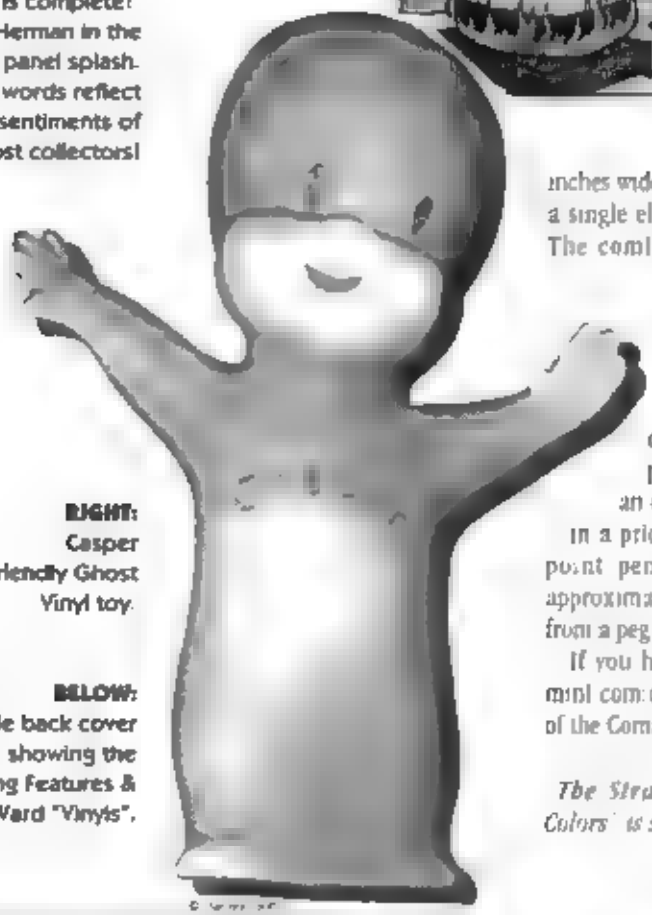

Famous Characters ... now in Life-Like Vinyl
Manufactured exclusively by HUNGERFORD PLASTICS CORPORATION, Morristown, N.J.

LEFT: Inside front cover advertising the Peanuts character "vinyls" using [illegible] drawings.

Only the Harvey characters are known to have the mini-comic header "card".

Duane Dimock Explores the World of Collectibles

UPPER RIGHT:
"At last! My collection is complete!" says Herman in the one panel splash. His words reflect the sentiments of most collectors!



RIGHT:
Casper the Friendly Ghost Vinyl toy.

BELOW:
Inside back cover showing the King Features & Jay Ward "Vinyls".

inches wide and had just two panels per page (sometimes a single elongated panel was used as a "splash" page. The comic contains four separate stories, one for each Harvey character vinyl toy.

Finding a Mint copy of this book may well be impossible. That's because in its role as a "header" for each toy, the comic was stapled four times (horizontally) to keep the comic closed and to attach it to the top of the clear plastic bag. Not only that, but each comic has an empty white circle for the store owner to write in a price (usually done with a grease pencil or ball point pen) and was punched with a 1/4" hole approximately in the middle, to allow the toy to hang from a peg (or rack) in the store.

If you have additional info about the vinyls or the mini comics, please send them to Duane's World in care of the Comic Book Marketplace. ■

The Strange Case Of The Missing Four Colors is solved in the next Duane's World!

FAMOUS CHARACTERS IN LIFE-LIKE VINYL

KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

Manufactured exclusively by HUNGERFORD PLASTICS CORPORATION, Morristown, N.J.

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Timelys are still breaking all the rules...

Welcome back to the second "Schiffman Report" for CBM. I hope you found the information presented last issue both informative and useful. Special thanks to the many who wrote or called with your comments.

The first few months of 1995 have been very eventful. We find ourselves in the same position that most of us were in last year: can the market go higher? We really wondered when even low grade issues of Golden Age books began to sell for multiples of Guide, yet now most accept this trend as a "given" even when we tack on another point and a half to the price of a particular book. Like so many other markets, the key to this one is education and information... and those that stay on top of the market come out best.

For example, consider a VG- copy Terrific #5 which Guides for $85. Would anyone buy it for more than $1,000.00? The answer is yes. A few collectors competed for this rare book until the winning bid was an amazing $1,350. Some observers were shocked at the record setting price... but others who really know the market were not.

And there are many other equally interesting market events that provide useful insights to present and future trends. Let's look a look at some of them:

Silver Age- Last issue we explored the "market myth" that some continue to suggest. Namely that the present skyrocketing interest in Golden Age has caused a slump in the Silver Age market. Some have even used the term "dead" when discussing Silver.

The copious amount of lip service given to the hot Golden Age market has not caused this anticipated slump. My sources across the country report that the number of Silver Age transactions drastically surpasses any other area of the market.

Added to this interest is revelation is a market anomaly, a curious situation that not follow normal market patterns. Usually when a specific category, genre, etc... of books is sought [illegible] who hold these books are willing to part with them for less than market value, and sometimes even then have a difficult to locate a buyer.

It is true that the emphasis on the resurgence of the Golden Age market in much of the print media has led a goodly number of long term Silver Age collectors to sell material in order to enter the GA market. But it is important to note, and this is the anomaly, that these sellers are not having difficulty finding buyers and realizing close to full market prices, even with quantity sales. Individual High Grade 10 centers and some early 9.2 centers continue to sell easily above Guide.

There are still more than enough Silver Age collectors staying in the market to purchase the available "bargains" as they make their way into the general market. Seasoned collectors haven't forgotten how difficult it is to obtain higher grade 1955-1965 books, (especially keys) regardless of what comics are in the highest demand.

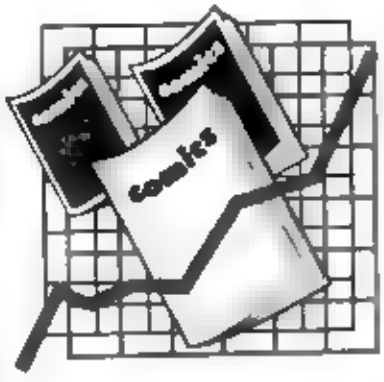
They also predict (as I do) that it won't be too long before many of these "Silver sellers" are back to collecting Silver again. As an example, one Bay Area collector has been actively buying Silver Age from his collecting peers during the past few months. He's already received one call wanting to buy back Silver Age books he purchased just six months ago... and for an additional 15% premium over his original purchase price.

Another group of Silver collectors has expanded their wants to include "esoteric" and "off brand" Silver Age books from the mid to late sixties. In highest demand are the Charlton "Ditko art" books including Captain Atom, Blue Beetle, and the Question. Charlton books had to compete with the huge Marvel stable and the top DC books. Their print runs were small and newsstand returns have been reported as high. These factors help to make high grade copies truly scarce.

Silver Age Sales: Showcase #4 FN+ $4,500; Showcase #8 VF $3,600; Space Adventures #33 VF/NM $250; Mystery In Space #87 VF/NM- $118; Flash #123 FN+ $350; Justice League Of America #1 VF+ $2,100; Justice League of America #46 VF/NM $95.00;

continued on page 70

MARKET REPORTS



[illegible]
San Diego Comics & Collectibles
San Diego, CA

New issue sales may be slipping of late but not Golden and Silver Age sales are on the rise. With more and more pure speculators leaving the hobby, we are left with a nice core of collectors. These "true" collectors seem more interested in filling the "holes" on their want list than investing in potential future profits. They don't seem to be "condition-obsessive" either. In my store I have found that lower grade material is moving better than ever. Turnover on these books is amazing when they are priced slightly below Guide. SD Comics & Collectibles has been extremely successful in selling books ranging in grade from Fair to Very Good at 10%-200% below Guide prices.

Silver Age- Mystery In Space #59 GD $.5, #62-70 GD $.[illegible] #[illegible]74, #76-80 VG $.2 ea., #75 VG+ $40, #81-86 VG $9 ea., #87 GD $17, #88-90 GD $12 each, #91-92 FR $1 ea., Gold Key's Magnus Robot Fighter #11-19 VG $7.50 ea., Fantastic Four Annual #4 VG+ $.4; Amazing Spider-Man 1 FR/GD $550. #3 FN $5500; All-American Men of War #4 GD $36. #7 GD $18, #14 VG $35. #50 VG+ $17, #71 VG $8, #72 VG+ $10, #80 VG $8, #83 VG $5; Star Spangled War Stories #131 VF $40; Sold on consignment—Incredible Hulk #2-6 in grades ranging from FN to VF+ $5,800. Recently acquired in low grade Showcase #27-33, Brave and Bold #31-43, #38-41 and a ton of lower grade 10¢ DC War titles.

Golden Age- Sensation #35 FN $12.[illegible] Commandos #23 GD $.0, #17 GD $.5. #.8 GD $.2.50

[illegible] ROSENBERG & SCOTT WHALEY

Great Neck, NY & Alexandria, VA

First of all we would like to express our delight with the return of the Comic Book Marketplace. From a collectors standpoint we are elated that there is now a well made publication dealing solely with Golden and Silver Age issues. From a dealer's standpoint we are pleased that our decision to advertise monthly in CBM as already begun to pay off!

Silver Age- This market remains quite strong. Sales, although leveling off a bit from the feverish pace of January and February, are steady. This, in our opinion, is a very good sign. With all the attention currently being given to the Golden Age market we were bracing for an outright slowdown in Silver sales. However, this is not what we have seen. We are happy to report that there are many many collectors out there that are extremely loyal to this era of comics. It is refreshing to know that people are actually buying what they enjoy regardless of the hype. It is also important to note that Silver Age collectors are actually benefiting from the increased demand for Golden Age. Over the last few years most of the money has been chasing high grade Silver and it has been difficult, if not impossible, to buy these books without paying a huge premium. (The premium represents the fact that a dealer has three or four customers for a given book.)

At the same time Golden Age collectors have been able to attain books at relatively cheap prices. Although there is no doubt that Golden Age is scarcer in grade, Golden Age collectors have truly enjoyed a price advantage due to high demand for Silver over the last few years. We believe this trend is currently reversing itself. Dealers are already pricing high grade Golden Age books at two to three times Guide. I do not know many true Golden Age collectors who are happy about this. But I do know a few silver collectors that are excited about the decrease in competition for the books they want. Was it not the best time to buy Gold when everyone wanted Silver? Maybe the reverse is also true!

Recent Sales Include- Amazing Spider-Man #9 NM* $1,00, #17 NM- $650, #28 NM $525, #40 NM/M $425. Fantastic Four #4 NM $270, #6 NM 1200, #25 NM- 530. Tales of Suspense #39 NM- 4600, #40 NM- 1700. Magnus #2 NM(B) 200, #3 NM(B) 175. X-Men #1 VF 3500, #2 NM 2000, #3 NM 875, #6 NM- 340.

Golden Age- I must admit it is difficult to come up with an original perspective when it comes to this market. There has been so much talk lately that anything I say will surely be redundant. But I'll give it a try.

I would first like to say that we feel high grade Schomburg war covers (Startling, Black Terror, Fighting Yank) are not good investments at an average guide price of about $150 in Near Mint. We think these books are overpriced and lack true Schomburg cover art. This coupled with the lack of historical significance (World War II was not a real war.) leaves these books with an understandably small following. So... having said that I will make a standing offer of three times guide to anyone looking to rid themselves of these incredibly bad investments. (Sarcasm didn't work, eh?)

The rest of the Golden Age market is only limited by the lack of available material. The idea of looking for a particular issue in high grade is getting less and less realistic unless luck is with you and you are willing to pay the healthy premium mentioned above.

Recent Sales Include- Batman #16 F/VF $1,900, #17 VF/NM $1,200, $18 NM $2,000. #50 VF $500. Also assorted Bethlehem sci-fi fantasy and pre-horror. (Too many to list)

Golden Age collectors with a bit more extensive want lists are obviously going to have a much better chance of finding something to buy. We have a few collectors who only ask for a tiny list of high grade books. They are often disappointed. What do you say to the customer that calls for a high grade Suspense #3 or an All Winners #19? There's not a lot to say. So long 'till next time!

[illegible] GUZMAN

Comic Detective, Covina, California

During the past year, several mainstream publications have focused on the investment potential of comic book collecting. In March 1994, Money Magazine made a point of noting that comic books were one of two collectible markets that have not lost money since 1980. Casual perusals of local newspapers, Reader's Digest, Forbes, even subscription newsletters such as the Bottom Line, have all contributed to a higher level of collecting awareness. Such mercenary motivations withstanding, the current climate of the country is witnessing a return to more innocent pursuits. This wave of nostalgia will combine with the mainstream acceptance of comics to create a synergetic growth within the hobby.

In the interim, it is interesting to watch two camps of dealers offering widely diverging views of the current market: one decries the Silver Age market dead, while the other proclaims it alive, well, and prospering. I suspect that each has a vested interest in their respective postures. I certainly subscribe to the latter, having had no difficulty moving high-grade Silver Age Marvel or DC comics. Likewise, Golden Age comics—regardless of condition— move well.

Black Cover Syndrome? - Speaking of condition, a fellow dealer recently commented in this column regarding the availability of Amazing Spider-Man #28. Though noting it to be a first appearance issue, I do not believe this has acted as a catalyst for its recent increase in value. It is the infamous "black cover syndrome", otherwise invisible minor defects become magnified when pressed against an unforgiving black background. Even more recent key issues, such as Avengers #57 and House of Secrets #92, are likewise difficult to find in high grade for this reason. As for recent sales, following are some transactions from December through February:

Some Silver Age Sales - Amazing Adult Fantasy #7 VG $75, #8 VG $70, #10 VF $175; Amazing Adventures #3 FN $.00; Aquaman #1 VF/NM $225; Batman #120 VF $135; Flash #107 VG $70, #116 VF $100, #118 VF- $70; Journey Into Mystery #80 VF $75; Robin Hood Tales #12 VF $90; Showcase #6 VG+ $325, #12 FN- $200; Tales Of Suspense #38 VG $30, #32 VG $35, and #33 FN+ $40.

Golden Age Sales - Captain America #7 VG $375; Detective #43 VF $500, #71 FN $.65; four book package: Superman #49 FN+, World's Finest #4 VG/FN-, #5 VG, and #24 VF all for $700.

DANIEL GREENHALGH
Showcase New England
Wallingford, Connecticut

Two big news items to start: We have just recently completed our first Catalog, an arduous but worthy task! Also I have just returned from the New York show and it was incredible! In terms of overall sales and purchases, it ranked right up there with Chicago and San Diego. This show also helped re-confirm my belief that the market for Silver Age is still strong.

Silver Age- My recent comments about the strength and growth potential of the Silver Age market seems to have gotten a number of responses... some of those suggested I'm a little too bullish about Silver. I still hold the position that Silver has the greatest potential for growth in the long run. It may appear to be a little stagnant at the moment. But that is only because the prices for high profile books (such as Showcase #4 and A.F #15) have been pushed to the limit in the current market. In case you haven't noticed, the prices for books like A.S.M. #2 through #9, FF #2 through #20, and early DC Silver Age titles like JLA and GL are out of control ... and fetching multiples in high grade of two to twenty and one-half times Guide!

If you are currently investing in books as a commodity I think it makes sense to spend your money on high grade, non key Silver. This should be good news for Silver Age collectors since many Silver books are very affordable. For those who still prefer investing in keys, I think X-Men #1 in FN or better is a good purchase at a near Guide price.

Some recent Silver Age sales include Amazing Fantasy #15 FN+ (restored) $2,700; FN (restored) $2,300, FN- $3,800; Amazing Spider-Man #1 VF $9,500, FN $5,200, FN (restored) $2,200, VG- $1,200; #3 VF $1,200; #4 VF/VF+ $1,000, VF $900; Incredible Hulk #1 VF+ $11,000, GD/VG $950; Daredevil #1 VF+ $1,200; X-Men #1 FN/FN+ $1,400, FN $1,250; Journey Into Mystery #83 VF $2,500; Avengers #1 VF- $800; Showcase #4 VF (restored) $3,500, GD/VG $2,100, #22 FN/FN+ $1,100; Flash #105 VF- $2,400; J.L.A. #1 FN- $700, Green Lantern #1 FN $700.

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Fantastic Four #48 NM- $1,050.00; Blue Beetle #1 (1967) VF/NM $65.00; and Amazing Spider-Man #50 FN $215.

Bronze Age- Many collectors that were priced out of the high end Silver Age market, and didn't (or were unable to) jump into the Golden Age market, found the 70s market a friendly refuge.

What they discovered (and documented) by actively searching was that there are certain issues and titles from the 70s that are very difficult to locate in any grade. Many kept this information "close to the vest" for as long as possible and bought these books for very reasonable prices.

Now other collectors and investors are looking for the same 70s material... and finding it challenging, rewarding, fun. This contradicts what they may have initially believed about Bronze Age material and what was suggested in some of the comic press.

This second group of BA collectors are willing to step up and pay prices that are way, way above Guide, yet considered by those "in the know" as fair market prices. $46 for a VF/NM Night Nurse #1? Two collectors recently paid it. February saw a new record price for All-Star Western #10 when a NM copy sold for $185. Adventure #498 NM (first appearance of the Black Orchid) sold for $32.

On the Marvel side, Amazing Adventures #1 in VF/NM sold for $40, and a VF+ copy of Chamber of Darkness #4 went for $34.

The Batman title has also garnered renewed collector interest with the Batman movie due for release this summer. Batman #234 is an often overlooked first appearance of the "modern" Two-Face and a VF/NM copy recently sold for $89.

Collectors are also searching for obscure Gold Key and Whitman books, along with the Kirby 4th World Jimmy Olsen issues. A Pink Panther #1 (1970) in FN sold for $22.

Collectors Watch- A trend has emerged among the ranks of savvy 70s collectors. They are searching for the last issues of many Gold Key/Whitman titles and are now beginning to pay higher than Guide prices for them. These collectors have already discovered that these "last issue" books suffered from low print runs, poor and sporadic distribution, and the effects of a publishing house with less-than-perfect managerial leadership at the end. Few copies were purchased and even fewer survived.

50s books and post Golden Age- The attention of the market seems everywhere BUT on the 50s material lately, and this has been a boon for market savvy collectors. Dealers have been looking to fill their customer's demands, and that means they've been preoccupied with Gold and Silver. Dealer attention to this material seems at a low ebb, and that is just fine with collectors. I think prices have only begun to rise drastically above Guide levels.

A dominant collecting trend is the tight focus on the last few issues of the timely characters, obscure Fox love stories, and pre-code horror. Unfortunately, EC is still waiting for collectors to move these horror classics to the top of the 50s demand list. Even the Frazetta issues of Famous Funnies are re-gaining popularity and demand after a long sleep. The 50s offer some of the most diverse and esoteric books from a single era. Buried within the years 1950 - 1957 are some of comicdom's most exciting and undiscovered material. The Farmer's Daughter #1 FN $38; Flash #102 FN++ $980; Mr. Anthony's Love Clinic #1 NM $78; My Love Story #3 (1956) VF/NM $ 55; True Love Pictorial #6 FN/VF $60; and Sub Mariner #39 VF/NM $725.

Golden Age- Timely books continue to lead the way, which is not really news to anyone that follows the market, even at a distance. Yet, what is interesting is that when a market reaches a perceived point of heavy price saturation, collectors tend to back off but not in this case. Last year at this exact time, the majority of the market leaders were questioning the direction the market was taking, and if it could possibly go even higher. Those prices are long gone, and have been multiplied many times.

Golden Age- If you're a Golden Age collector and you have money to spend, I suggest you consider spending it today. Not tomorrow, as the demand for Golden Age books is going through a period of radical price escalation. We just recently sold a lightly restored copy of Detective #27 (in apparent VF) for $60,000 — a possible record (at the time of sale) for a book with restoration far as I know. If it did set a record, I don't expect it to last long. It seems that new record prices for Golden Age books are being set every week!

A number of the sales below are records for both pedigree and non-pedigree books. Please note that some of the sold items listed were jointly owned by Showcase New England and Metropolis and/or Four Color Comics.

Some of the more notable sales include Action #1 VG+ (restored) for $35,000; the Larson copies of More Fun #52 & #53 for $80,000 and $30,000 respectively; and a copy of Marvel Comics #1 in apparent VF (light restoration) for $40,000. Other notable sales include Superman #1 FN+ (restored) $15,000; All American #16 FN+ (restored) $16,000; FN (restored) $14,000; #25 FN $2,800; Batman #1 FN/VF (restored) $12,000; FN (restored) $10,000; VG+ (restored) $7,500; #2 VG/FN $2,400; VG/VG+ $2,100; #3 FN+ $1,800; #4 FN+ $1,600; #5 VF+ $3,500; #47 VF+ (cleaned) $2,100; Flash #1 FN+ (restored) $14,000; Captain America #1 FN $12,000; #7 VF (restored) $1,100; #16 VF (restored) $1,050; #59 VF- $1,100; Daredevil Battles Hitler (file copy) $7,500; Wonder Comics #1 NM $13,500; Action #2 VF/NM (cleaned) $25,000; #2 GD $6,000; Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 FR $4,500; Human Torch #2 (#1) VG/FN $4,200; Detective #33 FN/VF (restored) $7,500; #38 FN+ (restored) $9,500; #38 VG+ (restored) $3,500; Mystery Men #1 VF+ $9,000; Suspense #1 FN+ $2,000; Fight #1 (Denver) $4,000; All Star #8 VG- $3,000; Flame #1 (Larson) $1,200; Victory #1 (Mile High) $4,800; Sheena #1 (Mile High) $5,500. Thanks for reading, and best of luck with your collection.

This interest has only brought in more collectors and investors, (and at these prices only very few can still look upon this as a "pure hobby"). With the opening of the Vault at Diamond International Galleries, and a part of the Overstreet collection selling for 1.6 million dollars, collectors have expressed concern that the market could not absorb this influx of this quantity. The large amount of material purchased at the Gallery opening, the next day and the following weeks has been almost instantaneously absorbed and disseminated throughout the collector community. In fact most market analysts and long-time dealers and collectors are adamant that the market could have easily absorbed many more of these books without a problem.

Right now Timelys are breaking all the rules! The basic rule of thumb is that FN Timelys sell for three times NM guide value and VF here Timelys can sell for five times the NM price.

This sudden explosion price over the few months will pose an interesting challenge for the Golden Age market in April when the 1995 Overstreet Annual Price Guide is released. The prices included in this edition were calculated in October of 1994 without the benefit of pricing data from the last few months.

The low prices in the guide has two market implications. The market novices around the country may sell a given book below actual value and those who have been following the market are probably going to get some great buys.

When was it the last time you heard of a seller dragging out a just-released Price Guide, and the buyer actually leaving happy about it? Even in previous market "hey days" dealers were usually only willing to pay 50% of Guide as a generally accepted benchmark. The dealer would then sell at Guide and make a profit. Now dealers are happy to pay full Guide for particular books, and then sell them for even more than double their money!

Good Girl Art- follows behind the Timely books for collector interest. These books still have plenty of room to grow, and the market recognizes that fact. DC is still gaining momentum and should finds its niche by the time the San Diego Convention rolls around in late July. But for every rule there is an exception. I have it on good authority that the owner of the Mile High copy of Action #1 was recently offered $400,000 and he declined! Steve Fishler sold the first appearance of Wonder Woman and the Mile High copy of All-Star #8 for $70,000. This scarce first Wonder Woman appearance is only now be accorded the importance that it deserves. Long overlooked by collectors, it is now dawning on collectors that this is a very important book.

As mentioned in the last column, Fawcett books are beginning to garner collector attention for their usually bargain prices. Yet the sale of the Mile High copy of Whiz #2 (#1) to Steve Geppi for a record price of $176,000 is an all time record.

Recent Sales: Phantom Lady #2 FN/VF $1,900; #17 FN $2,420; Action #50 VF+ $1,150; All Select #1 VF+ $9,800; Crime Reporter #2 FN $980; Human Torch #2 #1 FN $4,200; Mystery Men #8 VG/FN $225; Mystery Comics #1 GD/VG $210; Bulletman #1 FN+ $380; Black Terror #1 FN+ $1,400.

Original Art- I'm finding that this market although traditionally wholly separate from comic collecting, is now bringing in comic collectors that appreciate the true uniqueness of original art. A trend that has been gaining in popularity over the past six months is recreations from many of the more popular Golden Age artists. Since the majority of the original artwork done by these artists has been destroyed, these recreation take on an aura of authenticity, and this is reflected in the prices some of these are bringing. If the recreations are done well, they bringing outstanding prices. I look for more and more of these to surface over the next year, and for prices climb. When prices for works done only a few years old by the hot modern artists surpassed classic works by the Golden Age and Silver Age greats, collectors began to see the older art as something relatively inexpensive. Original art use to sell infrequently. Now, works by Ditko, Kirby, Kane, and Everett are achieving their rightful status and value. See you next month! ■

[redacted]

Timonium, Maryland

The following is a sample of Diamond International Gallery sales from January 27 through the first week of March. Most sales listed here occurred during the evening of Friday, January 27 (the Gallery Grand Opening), and on Saturday, January 28 (after the Guest Brunch). Before reviewing the sales data below, please consider the following:

(1) Because such a large quantity of material was purchased in such a short period of time, the grade was not recorded on the master inventory list of sales, thus no grade appears here.

(2) Although some fraction of this material was VG or less, the vast majority was in FN, VF and NM.

(3) A large percentage of the material sold was a portion of the recently acquired Overstreet collection.

(4) Sale prices listed below include numerous pedigreed books (Mile High, White Mountain, San Francisco, Larson, etc.) that can generally be identified by sale prices that are larger multiples of Guide.

(5) Many record sale prices were established and can be found throughout the list.

Action Comics #1 $75,000, #2 $15,000, #2 $2,500, #4 $700, #5 $3,150, #6 $7,200, #11 $1,400, #13 $5,200, #15 $950, #17 $2,200, #19 $1,420, #24 $2,100, #89 $600. Adventure Comics #33 $125, #37 $1,450, #40 $25,000, #47 $2,385, #48 $15,000, #49 $2,000, #66 $1,870, #75 $10,000, #75 $1,820, #79 $800, #92 $790, #118 $1,295. Adventures into Terror #1 $350, #12 $100. Adventures of Bob's Big Boy #1 $450. Adventures into Weird Worlds #4 $150, #6 $166.50, #7 $166.50, #8 $166.50. Adventures into Terror #7 $170. Adventures into the Unknown #1 $450, #2 $480, #3 $276, #8 $250. Air Fighters #1 $1,620, V2/8 $400. All American #14 $950, #19 $13,000, #21 $2,200, #25 $1,800, #47 $930, #55 $450. All Flash #32 $700. Al. Negro #1 $4,320. All Select #1 $2,600, #4 $1,000, #6 $900, #9 $1,000. All Star #4 $5,000, #12 $2,800. All Top #8 $750. All True Crime #35 $20. All Winners #1 $1,200, #1 $8,000, #11 $700, #19 $1,100, #21 $2,000. All Select #2 $2,500. Amazing Mystery Funnies V2/#1 $750. Amazing Adventure Funnies #1 $1,550. Amazing Adventures #2 $220. Amazing Man #20 $900, #22 $900. Amazing Mystery Funnies #1 $2,000, V2/#9 $900, V2/#12 $1,080. America's Best #18 $210. America's Best Comics #1 $350, #3 $571.50, #8 $120. America's Biggest Comic #1 $225. Animal #2 $550. Archie #1 $2,000. Arrow #1 $1,100. Astonishing #34 $35, #55 $99, #57 $113. Atomic Comics #1 $200. Atomic Mouse #36 $28.

Batman #1 $60,000, #47 $2,100, #65 $350. Black Terror #1 $600. Black Hood #17 $300. Black Magic #2 $400. Black Terror #4 $400, #7 $320, #8 $30, #11 $75, #13 $100, #14 $60, #15 $250, #16 $250, #17 $250, #19 $250, #21 $300, #22 $400, #23 $250, #24 $270, #26 $225, #27 $250. Blue Beetle #14 $495, #15 $495, #16 $392, #18 $315, #19 $405, #20 $450, #22 $293, #23 $293, #24 $293, #25 $75, #26 $293, #27 $243, #28 $234, #29 $189, #36 $.60, #46 $180, #47 $750, #48 $500, #49 $200, #50 $150, #51 $500, #52 $600, #54 $900, #55 $250, #56 $600, #57 $100, #59 $50. Blue bolt #105 $225, #107 $100, #108 $165, #110 $125, #114 $300, #116 $100, V2/#11 $110, V3/#5 $25. Blue Ribbon #1 $2,800, #6 $594, #7 $594, Boy Commandos #26 $200, #32 $135, #33 $180, #34 $180, #35 $180, #36 $2.0. Bozo the Clown #3 $98, #4 $98. Brenda Starr V2/#5 $300, #14 $850.

Cannon Ball #1 $175, #2 $175. Captain America #7 $3,450, #12 $1,000, #14 $1,900, #14 $1,400, #15 $1,890, #29 $600, #31 $820, #37 $450, #38 $500, #46 $1,200, #47 $750, #50 $500, #5. $425, #53 $800, #54 $500, #57 $700, #58 $400, #61 $800, #62 $600, #70 $700, #75 $525, #76 $275. Captain Battle #5 $585. Captain Courageous #6 $350. Captain Flight #10 $75. Captain Video #1 $525. Captain Aero #1 $800. Casper #1 $750. Catman #12 $525, #28 $700, #31 $100. V3/#2 $360. Champ #17 $998. Champion #10 $750. Charlie Chan #1 $600. Classic Comics #43 $750. Clown #1 $70, #2 $44, #3 $44. CMO #1 $385. Columbia #1 $240. Comic Cavalcade #64 $200. Crack #25 $400, #32 $300. Crackajack Funnies #1 $1,550, #9 $500. Crimes of Women #1 $450, #2 $100, #3 $175, #6 $200, #11 $150, #12 $75.

Daredevil Battles Hitler #1 $6,500. Daring Mystery #1 $20,000. Dark Mysteries #1 $600. Detective #1 $60,000, #4 $2,000, #12 $1,080, #13 $1,400, #15 $1,080, #18 $1,080, #22 $1,480, #24 $3,000, #27 $70,000, #27 $45,000, #30 $8,000, #31 $25,000, #33 $30,000, #36 $6,000, #37 $3,000, #44 $630, #46 $630, #54 $338, #61 $1,500, #68 $5,000. Detective Picture Stories #1 $2,650. Diary Secrets #12 $250. Donald Duck in Disneyland #1 $105. Dynamic #16 $100.

Eerie #1 $750. Exciting #1 $1,500, #9 $500, #23 $100, #31 $350, #34 $300, #59 $400, #60 $300, #62 $300, #65 $300, #66 $250.

Famous Funnies #1 $7,500, #1 $8,500, #209 $650, #210 $650, #211 $650, #212 $650, #215 $650. Famous Funnies Series #1 NN $6,500. Fantastic #1 $3,300, #21 $1,138, #22 $1,050, #23 $1,138. Fight #1 $2,000. Fighting American #6 $600. Fighting Yank #6 $320. Flame #2 $2,100, #6 $1,400, #8 $1,400, #8 $500. Flaming Love #2 $75. Flash #2 $3,000, #3 $6,250, #4 $3,500, #10 $1,000, #13 $1,400, #14 $900, #16 $1,200, #23 $900, #31 $400, #53 $350. Flintstones #3 $68, #5 $68. Four Color #16 $700, #18 $530, #20 $300, #25 $520, #140 $180, #352 $.80, #157 $260, #191 $120, #204 $140, #220 $160, #.020 $53, #1032 $16, #1038 $38, #1040 $90, #1042 $30, #1043 $180, #1046 $45, #1049 $60, #1050 $60, #1055 $60, #1064 $42, #1066 $120, #.069 $105, #1071 $120, #1084 $24, #1087 $90, #1091 $48, #1098 $75, #.100 $180, #1101 $53, #1103 $173, #1104 $68, #1105 $135, #1109 $160, #1112 $60, #1114 $48, #1122 $24, #1124 $90, #1128 $270, #1129 $98, #1131 $18, #1132 $39, #1144 $113, #1150 $60, #1152 $225, #1155 $150, #1159 $90, #1168 $225, #1171 $18, #1191 $173, #1192 $188, #1201 $30, #1204 $18, #1205 $53, #1208 $225, #1213

$75, #1249 $165, #1264 $45, #1270 $150, #1275 $225, #1285 $173, #1286 $150, #1288 $113, #1311 $225, Friendly Ghost Casper #2 $100, #3 $50, #4 $50; Frisky Fable #1 $130; FrontLine Combat #5 $150, #8 $125; Funnies on Parade #1 $5,250; Funny Folks #16 $40; Funny Page V4/#1 $500; Funny Pages #6 $1,100; Funny Picture Stories #11 $1,000; Future Comics #1 $1,275.

g-l Ghost Rider #3 $450; Green Giant #1 $1,0400; Green Hornet Comics #1 $2,500; Green Mask #1 $2,000

Heart Throbs #4 $60, #10 $50; Here's Howie #6 $30; Hit #1 $1,900, #5 $1,500, #8 $1,000 #23 $840, #25 $950, #40 $110; Hollywood Diary #1 $100, #2 $60; Hollywood Film Stories #3 $75; Hollywood Secrets #1 $200, #3 $30; Howdy Doody #1 $675; Human Torch #8 $3,600, #12 $990, #23 $750.

I Love Lucy #6 $113, #7 $113, #8 $113, #9 $113, #11 $98, #12 $98, #16 $98, #17 $98, #18 $98, #19 $98, #21 $83, #22 $83, #23 $83, #26 $83, #32 $83.

Jack Armstrong #1 $200; Jackpot #4 $1,000; Jo-Jo #11 $150, #17 $125, #25 $200; Joker #2 $750; Journey Into Mystery #1 $2,000.

Leave it to Binky #6 $35, #12 $30; Little Dot #1 $850, #3 $260, #4 $200, #5 $300; Little Giant #4 $400

m Mad Hatter #1 $540; Manhunt #14 $15; Marvel Mystery #7 $2,100, #8 $2,900 #12 $2,000, #44 $1,120; Marvel Boy #1 $500; Marvel Family #89 $100; Mary Marvel #1 $1,200 #1 $1,200; Mask #1 $2,800; Master #2 $2,000, #3 $1,480, #29 $660, #33 $525, Master Comics #2, $4,000, #40 $275; Men's Adventures #28 $175; MGM's Tom & Jerry (T&J) Summer Fun #4 $135; MGM's T&J Toy Fair #1 $203; MGM's T&J Winter Carnival #1 $495; MGM's T&J Winter Fun #3 $135, #4 $113, #5 $113, #6 $113; Mickey X-Mas Giveaway Comic NN $500; Miss America #1 $500; Miss America Magazine #2 $1,000;Miss Fury #2 $1,300; More Fun #25 $1,600, #28 $800, #29 $800, #30 $690 #31 $560, #34 $1,500, #36 $400, #41 $440, #43 $1,200, #44 $342, #47 $1,200, #48 $1,200 #52 $60,000, #52 $60,000, #53 $30,000, #53 $30,000, #55 $7,000, #59 $3,700, #61 $1,100, #62 $1,290, #65 $1,710, #68 $990, #69 $830, #70 $990, #72 $540, #74 $940, #78 $860; Moses & The Ten Commandments #1 $105, Motion Picture Comics #110 $500; Motion Picture Funnies Weekly #1 $2,000; Movie Comics #1 $2,800; My Date #1 $70, #2 $90, #4 $50; My Experience #22 $75, #21 $75; My Love Story #4 $80; Mystery Comics #2 $1,875, #2 $650, #3 $525, #4 $500, #4 $600, #8 $1,000; Mystery Men Comics #1 $6,300, #1 $3,000, #2 $2,625, #3 $2,363, #3 $750, #4 $2,100, #5 $1,683, #6 $1,400, #7 $1,000, #7 $1,400, #8 $1,400, #9 $875, #9 $1,225, #10 $875, #10 $1,225, #11 $625, #11 $875, #12 $805, #13 $910, #14 $805, #15 $805, #16 $805, #17 $805, #18 $805, #19 $910, #20 $770, #24 $770, #26 $770, #27 $770, #28 $770, #29 $770, #30 $770, #31 $77

n-r Nancy & Sluggo Travel Time #1 $43; National #15 $600, #16 $850, #19 $550; National Comics #1 $2,850; New Adventure #17 $1,500, #18 $740, #22 $2,000; Pep #20 $1,242, #26 $1,360; Personal Love #32 $350; Phantom Lady #17 $2,000, #20 $400, #21 $400, #22 $350, V5/#1 $15, Plastic Man #1 $2,750; Police Comics #1 $6,000; Power Comics #1 $250, #2 $500, #3 $250; Punch #12 $280; Rawhide Kid #4 $125; Red Ryder #1, $1,260; Richie Rich #1 $1,260; Rifleman #3 $113; Robin Hood #1 $200, #12 $200; Roy Rogers #38 $630; Rulah #18 $500.

s Samson #2 $1,225, Scoop #2 $400; Sensation #1 $15,000, #39 $525, #41 $450, #113 $200; Shadow Comics #1 $3,000; Shield-Wizard #1 $800; Shocking Mystery #50 $240, #53 $100; Silver Streak Comics #6 $21,000, #6 $8,000; Slam Bang Comics #1 $1,100; Sparkler #39 $200; Special Comics #1 $1,250; Special Edition Comics #1 $6,000; Speed #3 $650, #34 $280, #35 $125, #43 $140; Speed Carter, Spaceman #1 $550; Star Spangled #64 $500, #65 $686, #66 $940, #73 $800, #75 $800, #83 $610, #86 $720, #87 $920, #88 $710, #89 $710, #90 $710, #91 $710, #92 $710, #93 $710, #94 $710, #95 $660, #96 $450, #97 $360, #98 $450, #99 $360, #100 $450, #101 $350, #102 $350, #103 $350, #104 $350, #105 $350, #106 $350, #107 $350, #108 $350, #109 $350, #110 $370, #111 $370, #112 $410, #113 $520, #114 $218, #115 $380, #116 $370, #117 $380, #119 $350, #120 $370, #121 $350, #122 $370, #123 $260, #124 $260, #125 $260, #126 $260, #128 $260, #129 $260, #130 $310; Startling #10 $1,500, #24 $280, #28 $250, #29 $300, #41 $300, #46 $200, #47 $160, #49 $460, #50 $250; Strange Adventures #21 $400, #50 $300, #54 $190; Strange Tales #74 $190, #80 $190, #81 $160, #85 $160, #86 $160, #93 $150, #97 $420; Strange Worlds #5 $510; Sub-Mariner #3 $3,000, #4 $2,500, #13 $1,000, #32 $1,000, #42 $700; Superman #48 $700; Sure-Fire #2 $700; Suspense #1 $1,000 #8 $2,400, #12 $400

t-v Tales of Suspense #1 $1,900, #2 $600, #6 $460, #8 $525, #10 $460, #11 $325, #13 $330, #15 $330, #17 $330, #18 $330, #23 $275, #24 $240, #26 $220, #29 $220, #30 $250, #31 $250, #34 $220, #35 $230, #36 $220, #37 $220, #38 $250; Tales to Astonish #8 $470, #27 $4,600; Target V2/#10 $225; Tarzan's Jungle Annual #6 $125; Terrific #5 $600, #6 $675; Terrifying Tales #12 $270; The Comics #1 $6,000; Thrilling #1 $1,400, #3 $625, #62 $200, #69 $300, #70 $200; Torchy #6 $750; Two Fisted Tales #24 $335, #27 $150; Uncle Donald & His Nephews Dude Ranch #52 $105; US Jones #1 $400; USA #5 $1,950, #10 $700; Victory Comics #1 $4,800

w-z Walt Disney's (WD's) Comics and Stories #1 $15,000; WD's Christmas Parade #6 $125, #7 $125; WD's Huey, Dewey & Louie Back to School #1 $125, WD's Lady & The Tramp #1 $158, WD's Mickey Mouse in Fantasyland #1 $180; WD's Mickey Mouse in Frontierland #1 $180; WD's Mickey Mouse Summer #1 $168; WD's Sleeping Beauty #1 $383, WD's Vacation in Disneyland #1 $125, WD's Vacation Parade #3 $125, #5 $135, Weird Horror #7 $125; Whiz #25 $1,500; Wierd #1 $3,500; Witchcraft #5 $180; Wonder #1 $10,000, #3 $400, #11 $100, #12 $300, #13 $400, #14 $300, #15 $300, #17 $300; Wonder Woman #2 $2,500; Wonder World #4 $1,625, #6 $1,400 #7 $1,400, #9 $1,400, #10 $1,400, #12 $875, Woody Woodpecker (WW) Back to School #2 $135, #3 $135, #6 $135, WW County Fair #2 $113, #5 $135; World's Fair 1939 $10,000; World's Finest #9 $1,500 #70 $300, Young Allies #2 $2,200; Young Men #24 $600; Zip #20 $900; Zoot #7 $600

■ **End Market Reports**

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from a boyhood friend of Larson's (Larson had even been his best man). They had read the Gazette articles with much interest as it prompted an old memory. Recently, Lamont's boyhood friend had cleaned out his mother's house and discovered a box of his old comics. He remembered as a boy that Larson had given him comics after he was finished reading them. He wondered if I "might be interested in them". MIGHT BE!

As described none of the books sounded like they were in particularly good condition, however, driven by curiosity and this incredible quirk of luck that these books even existed I dickered over a price. Well, these "lost Larsons" have arrived. For those other Larson collectors I offer these lost Larsons to add to your master list: Smash Comics #8, Feature Comics #34, Victory Comics #3, Star Spangled Comics #2, Minute Man Comics #2, and Super Mystery V2/#4. None of these books have the classic white pages of the "main" collection reflecting the unique storage conditions of the originals and no book grades better than a VG+. However, for me (and my "Larson mania"), these lost issues will always be a special and unique piece of the Larson legend.

–Jon Berk, Connecticut

Your "Larson mania" is apparently contagious... There seems to be quite a few collectors around the country that are actively seeking Larson copies. Maybe those who do have them in their collections might be willing to help us establish a "Larson registry" of sorts. What do think?

Dell's Davy's in DD in Disneyland!

Enjoyed your "King of the wild Comics Frontier" in Comic Book Marketplace #22, March 1995. I'd like to add one Del. Davy Crockett appearance to your list. It was the 3rd story in Dell Giant Donald Duck in Disneyland #1 (1955). Each of the Davy Crockett TV shows had a corresponding comic except the 2nd episode, "Davy Crockett goes to Congress". That episode was split into two comic stories. The "Congress" half was a story in the Davy Crockett Dell Giant. The other half tells of how Davy began his political career and that appears in the Donald Duck in Disneyland Giant. It's a very faithful adaptation of the TV episode, even to using the same dialogue. Once again, I enjoyed your story as well as your entire magazine. Keep up the good work.

Vincent J. Vinciato, New York

Thanks for the excellent info, Vincent. Sounds like your no stranger to the famous coonskin cap yourself!

Wild & Crazy

CBM is back and with a color section to boot! I must have been living a good life to have my all-time favorite magazine come back, just in time to help us sort out this wild and crazy Golden Age Market! I really enjoyed (read berserk) Nolan's Notebook and the Jon Berk piece on Gustavson Archers. I'd hope there will be more on this great early artist. Calhoun was splendid just like the old days of CBM and Matthew Gore's piece on Marvelman was excellent! How about Stickin' around for at least a hundred issues or so this time, will ya? 21 issues was just not enough!

–Milt Chase, Texas

There's that number again

Spectacular... Stupendous...

Thank the Fates that someone will print an article for us Harvey collectors, a not very common occurrence. Please tell Mark Arnold for me that his piece in #22 was spectacular . stupendous. and just plain wonderful! Thanks also to the editor and publisher for printing something for everyone. Thank you, thank you, thank you! I've asked my local store to put a CBM in my folder every month. Harvey collectors unite!

–Marian McElhaney, New York

You know Marian. . I wish you wouldn't hold your feelings in like that and just come right out and say what you think. Your among friends here! And I will tell Mark. I'll just be his feelings about Harvey are just as enthusiastic as yours! Mark informs me that he has several exceptionally interesting Harvey articles coming our way soon! I'm personally looking forward to the piece entitled "Those Hauntingly Horrific Harvey Horror Comics!

Little Information About Rarity

I enjoyed issue #22 very much. Thanks for the article about Timely Golden Age. In our hobby, there is amazingly little information about rarity of particular issues. I believe that this factor should be a much more important factor in determining the price of an issue. Any further work that can be done on this will help lead comics to prices that accurately reflect all factors.

I enjoyed the article about DC 100 Page Super Spectaculars very much. How about an examination of the merits of DC Special, DC Special Series, and DC Superstars?

Dan Kocher, Missouri

We have in hand Alan Bartholemew's article on the very topic you suggest. Look for it soon! And your comment about rarity data is well taken. So much research needs to be done to accurate quantify the actual number of existing copies. The lack of this information shows how much our hobby is still in its infancy.

Naiman's Notes!

First off fabulous chart by Alan Bartholemew. What a great job of research! Second. has anyone mentioned the "Bizarro" (reversed) Superman emblem on Superman's chest at the beginning of the 100 pager article? Third... Scott Shaw!'s Oddball article will certainly light the fire under me to go and look for Kuna issues. It's great to see a magazine like CBM filling the information gap in today's comic magazine desert and I m looking forward to future issues let's not forget, there are more characters out there other than superheroes!!!

–Michael Naiman, California

By chance do you mean other characters like ducks? As I as I know you are the only one who seems to have spotted the reverse Superman emblem so you get the issues "no prize" (and I do mean no prize!).

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On Board Since CBM #1

Just wanted to drop you a note of congratulations on starting up the CBM again. The Gold/Silver Age Quarterly was good but it didn't have the "magic" of the old CBM (and was somewhat expensive). A friend from Florida informed me of the re-birth of the magazine. Hey… I was on board since #1! Count me in on a one year subscription.

–Charles Mazza, Canada

We're working awfully hard to make CBM better than ever… but I have to admit that Magic is a tall order. Thanks for you encourage Charles. Nice to hear from you again.

Gelb's Mystery Writer

Hope readers enjoyed my column on Brain Boy (Men Of Mystery) that ran in Overstreet's Gold and Silver #6. I'm happy to report some progress has been made in identifying the "mystery" writer of the series. The ground-breaking book Who's Who of American Comic Books, edited by Jerry Bails and Hames Ware in 1973, lists, as his sole comics writing credit, someone named Herb Castle as the writer of Brain Boy. This information was recently confirmed for me by well-known comics historian Rich Morrissey, who said that Castle also wrote some issues of the Gold Key Magnus run. I wish Russ Manning were still alive to ask more about this true man of mystery!

While we may never know whether it was Castle who wrote the especially creepy and hallucinatory Brain Boy #6 (the issue anyone who's read the series will always remember), my hat's off to Mr. Castle for whatever role he did play in the short but illustrious history of this most unusual, entertaining comic series.

Keep up the great work on my favorite magazine about collecting old comics!

–Jeff Gelb, California

Your letter hits home with me, Jeff… and it was great to hear from you. Thanks for sharing your information update with our readers. Thanks also for supporting one of the "prime CBM directives": Give credit where credit is due! My interest in some of the remarkable (even humorous) issues you spotlighted in your nicely researched article has been on the increase of late, especially the more colorful of those quite excellent painted covers. As Jeff's column suggested, Brain Boy issues are still generally unfamiliar to many collectors, have some great covers, aptly named an "esoteric" title, are amazingly inexpensive, and are actually pretty old (as much as I hate to admit it…). These five qualities make BB an inevitable addition to my already overburdened want list!
(As for the mountain of undocumented painted covers… ah… now there an article project for some enterprising CBM reader who is a seriously "hard core" collector and a committed researcher. If you think you might like to attempt this undertaking, give me a call and I'll try to help!) Your BB piece was one of my personal favorites in the last Quarterly… and although we didn't have a seventh issue of Quarterly to publish them in, we received a number of letters expressing sentiments similar to mine. It's really great to have your "Men Of Mystery" column back in its original "home" magazine.

For Their Own Sake

I've never written to a magazine before and have apparently somehow missed the first 21 issues of the Comic Book Marketplace. I find it to be quite a remarkable publication and exactly what I've been looking for many years. I been collecting since the mid sixties and was happy to discover there are others like myself who have little interest in making money with comics and who just enjoy them for their own sake. Please count me among those who applaud your effort! Please count me "on board" for the long haul beginning with issue #22!

–Bernard M. Goldman, Virginia

Your sentiments are shared by many many of our readers. Welcome aboard for the long (longer than 21 issues) haul!

Larry With A Million Questions

I enjoyed CBM #22 - it was just as good as the earlier "original" issues. Question #1: Do you (as editor) actually read and answer the mail or does staff handle some/all of it. I'm asking because I know you gets lots of mail. Did this one make it to you personally? I've talked with you at several San Diego Cons and the responses (in all the magazines you edit) sound like you but you never know. This may sound a bit trivial, but it is important to me to have at least one way I could communicate directly with someone who is as knowledgeable as my friend says you are. So if it actually you Gary, here is my question #2: (if it's not really you then skip it). During the Grading forum/discussion you said (I'll quote since I have you on tape) "Carter's first rule of comic book grading states: Different defects have different esthetic value to different collectors." You did explain it further but I couldn't hear the "Supe #1" example. How about a repeat of it? If you do I promise not to be such a pain-in-the-ars at the next con like I was at the last - they don't call me "Larry with a million questions" for nothing!

–Larry Eckenberger, Arizona

I enjoyed your questions at the SD Con Larry, I'm sorry I didn't have the time and/or the opportunity to try to address them all. And yes it's really me. I personally read every letter and am happy to chat with any hobbyist (or potential hobbyist) with the exception of the ultra busy week just before we go to press.
So let's talk grading. As I stated in the Grading Guide (co-authored by yours truly and Robert Overstreet) and debated during the grading forum you mention, comic books (and some magazines) are among the most (if not The most) complex paper collectibles to grade. No other paper collectible has so many variables (e.g. colors, covers, cover art orientation/alignment/position, ink chemistry, UV coatings, varnish coatings, metallic inks, binding materials, bindery quality control, bindery equipment, bindery methodology, bindery personnel

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experience/expertise, printer quality control, printer equipment, printer methodology, printer personnel experience/expertise, paper type, paper handling and storage, paper chemistry, distributor handling (often mishandling), the numerous categories and kinds of damage that can be done by the reader… all these can never be quantified into a rigid, non-subjective system (in my opinion)… especially if you consider the most "unquantifiable" variable of all… the practically infinite range of collector preferences. And now for the Superman #1 problem I often pose to support my position. Take two decent copies of Superman #1, both identical except for one thing… copy A has a two inch tear in the front cover that starts at the upper left hand corner and runs diagonally into the yellow field but does not intersect any graphics or the logo. Only yellow paper is torn. Copy B has a much smaller, quarter of an inch vertical tear right across the very center of Superman's face. Now ask yourself… if offered one but only one of the copies, which do you choose? I've been posing this interesting dilemma for a number of years now, and the answers are mostly (approx. 70-75%) "I choose copy A!" even though it has a a significantly longer tear! I hope you see my point Larry. Perhaps we could continue this discussion at this year's SD Con? Now we've only got 999,999 questions to go! Thanks for writing!

Missed This Mag!

Congratulations at getting CBM back on the stands. As much as I enjoyed your "stint" at Overstreet, I've really missed this mag!

–Stephen Combs, Ohio

So Happy

So happy to find out that you are once again publishing the Comic Book Marketplace. Issue #22 is just as enjoyable and interesting as the pre-Overstreet issues. I'm sorry but I am just not entertained at all by modern comic books (other than the Gladstone books). In CBM #22 I especially liked the articles on Joe Shuster and Paul Gustavson (one of my favorites). I hope you will continue to print articles on pre-1940 comics and their creators and more obscure artists and comics.

–Bob Anderson, California

We will Bob, count on it! Gustavson is one of my favorites too!

May You Fill…

Welcome back Carter(s)! I know Mike Naiman will take full credit for that phrase, but he got some old East Coast input from yours truly on it. Gary, you always end your "Letter from the editor" column with the statement "may you fill the holes on you want list!" Well a big void on my want list has been filled with the revival of the old "Comic Book Marketplace". Beginning with issue #23 please hook me up with a subscription once again. Best of luck to both you and Lisa… looking forward to seeing see you in New York soon (at the 1995 Sotheby's grading committee)!

–Mike Dalessandro, New York

Looking forward to seeing you too Mike! Thanks for being one of the most loyal CBM readers from the very beginning!

Good Natured Kidding

Congratulations on the return of CBM. The upgrades to glossy paper and interior color really enhance the magazine's appearance; it's a first-class product. Even though my collecting focus is relatively narrow (DC Silver-present), I read CBM from cover to cover. Every article conveys a joyous enthusiasm for the material that can simply not be found elsewhere. Please consider my

What are your all-time favorite covers?

CBM readers would like to know!

List your top 5 favorite covers (plus the reasons why you picked them) and send them to:

CBM Fave Covers Survey
Comic Book Marketplace, P. O. Box 180900, Coronado, CA 92118
or FAX your picks: (619) 437-1993

subscription check as a vote of sincere appreciation and confidence. It was especially rewarding to read Alan Bahr's article on the DC 100 Page Super Spectaculars. I was subjected to a lot of good-natured kidding from my friends when I purchased a copy of #5 at the 1993 Mid-Ohio Con. I was great to be able to show them this article!

—Tom Hamilton, Ohio

I got a lot of not-so-good-natured kidding from my friends when I bought #5 at the newsstand! One of those "friends" from high school still sarcastically asks me at every reunion if I still buy those "love" comics.

Déjà Vu Time

Is it déjà vu time, or what? I see a white envelope with return address that says Comic Book Marketplace. Before I open the envelope I stand there a bit bemused and befuddled and my mind starts whirling 'where do I know this CBM title from'? It was one of those odd moments in time trying to connect the present with the past, and then it hit me! My favorite periodical is back! I opened the envelope and, lo and behold, I see that memorable logo and note that a feature article will concentrate on my all-time favorite line of books, the Timelys! Seriously, being a CBM subscriber since issue #2, I really missed your magazine when it ceased publication. Do you know that CBM was the only mag that prompted me to write letters (which you so graciously printed on two occasions)? When CBM ceased my leftover subscription moneys went to Overstreet's Comic Book Marketplace and then, later, the Gold & Silver Quarterly. Frankly, I was never too fond of the former, but I found the later was OK because I love Gold and Silver Age articles. However, I always liked the format of your CBM best and the 'slick' paper that you now use really enhances my enjoyment of CBM.

I do have a little bone to pick with you, however. Aside from a nice article on Alex Schomburg and a brief piece on Marvel Comics #1 that you published, the entire run of the 'old' CBM did not serve your 'Timely' readers very well. We got a lot of articles on Showcase, Brave and the Bold, and most of the DC Golden Age line, but not much 'Timely' material. This is astounding considering that Timelys are clearly, the hottest investment around. Please feature more articles on this group of gems.

Needless to say, I really loved your Timely market survey in issue #22. Much of the survey was really on target. I especially agreed with the fact that Daring Mystery #2 was found to be THE most difficult to find non-key issue. However, I was surprised to learn that all Winners #19 ties with Marvel #1 as THE most difficult to find Timely key issue. The 'sleepers' section was really interesting in that the most undervalued books seem to be the last issues of the superhero runs. The overall article was quite excellent. I also liked the piece on Joe Shuster and Alan Bahr's article on one of my favorite series, the DC 100 Page Super Spectacular.

I think that my Timely fixation is something that I acquired quite early on. When I was a youngster growing up in Brooklyn there was a great comic book shop called 'My Friend's Bookstore' on Flatbush Avenue. Later, found out that they were somehow connected with Passaic Book Store in New Jersey. At any rate, the year was 1969 and 'My Friend's' always had a nice selection of 1942-1944 All Winners and Captain America Comics. I was still able to identify some of these books in the Gerber Photo-Journal. I vividly remember that these books were in fine to near mint condition and were being sold for $20 a piece! I also remember that the store had their own price list and you could pick up Marvel Comics or Action Comics #1 for the then astronomical price of $450 a piece. Oh, how I long for those days! Fantastic Four #1 was priced at $20 and Avengers #1 for $4.50 (condition of book was not an issue back then). My real indoctrination to Timelys came with the Fantasy Masterpiece series (hey, all my pals in Brooklyn loved Marvels and those 'ancient' stories of Cap, Torch, and Subby were just too cool for words! After Fantasy Masterpieces, Steranko's History of Comics Volume One was published. Well, THAT oversized baby really cemented my interest in the Timelys. DC's were cool too, but not as cool as those crazy cluttered Timely covers!

I really started appreciating comics more when I hit 30 years old. Before that time, I was one 'stupid' collector. By that, I mean that when I was a teenager, I had the best books like Batman #1, Daredevil Battles Hitler, Mystic #1, Cap #3, etc.... and I always sold the books for a song because I needed money for girls. Now, the girls are gone and I wish I had the books still! I was out of the hobby for about 10 years, and then my future wife decided to get me a comic book for my 30th birthday. Well, I saw that Superman #60 that she purchased at a local flea market and I was hooked once more. Needless to say, I traded the Superman for, guess what, a USA #9! Some habits are just too hard to break... P.S. Wow, talk about evolution, I now have a Christmas pen pal by the name of Shelly Moldoff! Not bad for a 37 year old kid from Brooklyn...

—Frank W. Rohr, Florida

No Frank... not bad at all! Please note that CBM has included a fair amount of Timley info of late. And a special thanks to all who wrote in this month! The bushel basket of "welcomed back" cards and letters was both encouraging and touching... and as always, your comments, suggestions, and criticisms are well taken and seriously considered. If you take the time to write 'em... we'll take the time to read 'em! If you'd care to write, send your correspondence to:

Marketplace Mail
c/o Gemstone Publishing (West)
Comic Book Marketplace
P. O. Box 180900
Coronado, CA 92178-0900
or FAX us at (619) 437-1993

Esoteric & Scarce Timelys

Submitted by Gray W. Tracer

It wasn't too long ago that few collectors had even heard of these two books… but as the exploration of the "comic book unknown" turned towards the esoteric… and hard core Timely researchers began sharing their "secret" discoveries, more and more hobbyists began to appreciate and actively search for these interesting pieces in the Marvel/Timely/Atlas puzzle.

Comedy #9 (April, 1942) was the first issue (the first eight were titled *Daring Mystery*) and hit the stands during the Golden Age… when humor comics were overshadowed by the explosion in costumed heroes… and when the company had been publishing comics for only three and a half years.

Besides the era in which it was published, *Comedy* #9 is interesting for other reasons. The cover is filled with sadistic acts of violence disguised as "Comedy", an elderly gentleman on bicycle chasing a young women, and a dog eyeing a fire hydrant.

But inside *Comedy* #9 is the greatest surprise for inquisitive collectors. Most of the stories are actually rare appearances of Timely 3rd tier costumed heroes (some continued from Daring Mystery), including Capt. Dash, Citizen V, The Silver Scorpion (a female hero), and a rare Bill Everett creation… The Fin!

Witness #1 (September, 1948) was published during the "Timely Twilight"… just ten shorts months before the last issue of *Marvel Mystery*… and as the company began to move away from heroes and towards romance, horror, sci fi, western, and crime titles. In fact *Witness* #1 could be considered one of the transitional "missing links" between Timely and Atlas, and also has obvious ties to popular radio characters of the day like the Shadow and The Whistler.

Specimens of these two comics continue to be difficult to find… and when it comes to price, just throw your *Guide* away! Several enthusiastic buyers have reported a difficult time getting the few dealers that have had copies in stock to even agree to sell. Even experienced and seasoned dealers are having a rough time setting a price… and who can blame them? Determining an accurate and fair price for an item that will likely never come your way again and is sure to be the subject of ever increasing demand can be a nerve-racking proposition!

Beyond rarity and price, these two books have a lot of history, nostalgia, and fun to offer collectors. If a copy of *Witness* #1 or *Comedy* #9 happens to cross your path, take a second look. You just might find them to be as interesting as I did. ■

Have something you think would be of interest to your fellow collectors? Send it to Comic Book Marketplace, Fandom Flashbacks, P. O. Box 180900, Coronado, CA 92178-0900 or FAX us at (619) 437-1993.